TO A PICTURE POSTCARD.

You foolish girl!
Pray tell me why
Beneath a strip
Of evening sky,
And silver stars
And clouds of June
That float around
A monstrous moon—
Pray tell me why,
You foolish girl,
Your smiling eyes
And rows of pearl
Gleam radiantly,
Like shining gems,
Between those silly
Pine-tree stems?
You really can't
Defend your pose,
Your whims—or your
Delicious nose!
Ah, smile away;
My heart is barred.
(And yet, I think
I'll buy the card!)

J. Jefferson Farjeon.

Pauline Chase.

Photo *Bassano.*

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"GOOD MORNING, MAMMA DEAR."

From the Painting by E. Munier.

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FROM·THE·STALLS

Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

RUTH ARGENT.

One of the Attractions at the Gaiety Theatre.

"I wish I were back at school," said Miss Ruth Argent, "though I spent most of my leisure time in bed as a punishment for bad behaviour in class and because I was such a hopeless duffer at arithmetic.

"I never could do proportion; and problems such as: 'If two water taps are turned on, one small and one larger, how long will it be before two cisterns were emptied?' were problems never to be solved by me. A girl friend we called Toodles used to do them for me."

Miss Argent is a bright, witty girl, and a very pretty brunette with a pair of glorious brown eyes. Why she should want to go back to school is another insoluble problem, for she is getting on well on the stage. She played a Connie Ediss part for a while with success, but has a yearning for tragedy.

She has had two startling adventures. Once she woke up to find a burglar in her room, and once while on tour had hard work to prevent her boxes being taken by bailiffs who were put into the house on a suit against the landlady.

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Photo *Langfier.*

LEWIS WALLER,

The Idol of Matinée Maidens.

"Once more into the breach," began Mr. Lewis Waller, and then he stopped. He had recited the famous speech of Henry V. hundreds of times. But at a benefit *matinée* at the Adelphi his memory suddenly failed him.

The friendly audience cheered the while Mr. Waller stood with his face hidden in his hands. Then he silently walked off the stage.

"Once more into the breach," Mr. Waller presently returned, and did very well until about the middle of the oration, to the words: "Your fathers, like——" Then he stopped dead again.

The audience set to work to help him; but it was from the dress circle that final succour came. "Like so many Alexanders," suggested a lady. Mr. Waller bowed, and finished with all his accustomed power.

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GABRIELLE RAY,

Who Dances Divinely.

On the wall of many a rough shack in lonely outposts of the Empire hangs a portrait of Miss Gabrielle Ray, bringing a Ray of light—if the expression may be pardoned—into an otherwise dreary and cheerless existence.

Yet what are these beside the dull lives which Miss Ray illuminates in drab, smoky London by the daintiest and most bewitching dances?

She loves riding, and also, unless this is mere politeness, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

"I always read it all through *every* month," she says, "and especially 'From the Stalls,' to see if I am there myself."

Photo *Bassano.*

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield*

JANET SLATER,

A Beautiful and Youthful Actress.

She is slight in figure, demure in manner, and has a very sweet smile.

Miss Janet Slater, of the Gaiety Theatre, passed her girlhood's years in the strictest of convent schools. She had to rise at 5.30, go to bed at 9 o'clock, and never went out except for an hour or so's walk on Wimbledon Common, and then never met a soul, not even Mr. Swinburne.

She is very clever at music, and has made the subject a special study. "I never went in for an exam. though; father thinks exams. don't do people any good."

She loves her profession and believes in hard work. "I don't mean to ruin my constitution and waste my time in going to balls and dinners; besides, that kind of thing is such a bore."

What a prudent girl! She has played good parts on tour in "Sweet Nancy" and "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray."

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Photo Foulsham & Banfield.

JOE HOWARD.

From Across the Pond.

Miss Joe Howard, who is shortly to appear in the new piece at the Gaiety—title not yet announced—is a typical American girl.

She is very tall and graceful, with fine features, inclined to be fair, and claims to be one of the original set of Gibson girls. Certainly she looks the real, genuine thing.

Like many girls from over there, she is full of bright, intelligent talk; she loves London, and hopes to make a long stay. Not a bad example of her intelligence, by the way.

For our part, we want girls of the Gibson type. The more the merrier.

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Photo *Bassano.*

GLADYS ARCHBUTT,

A Favourite Musical Comedy Actress.

"Adventures?" remarked pretty Miss Gladys Archbutt reflectively. "Now, let me see.

"Once I was stranded in Wales with a company. The manager departed without warning, and we had to play on our own to raise our fares back to London, first redeeming the scenery, which the absconding manager had pawned. Once I was nearly guillotined by a falling curtain. I had fainted over my father's dead body, but he had expired rather too far down the stage. The corpse whispered to me to 'get back,' but that was impossible for a fainted person. However, I ducked just in time."

Miss Archbutt, who is altogether delightful and has pretty, fair hair, possesses the only dog that has ever kissed the Blarney Stone. The ceremony was performed when Miss Archbutt was at Cork on tour, on the dog's first birthday. He is a toy pom., and his name—Blarney—commemorates the kissing.

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Photo *Cadle's Agency.*

PENDER'S - - TROUPE OF - STILT GIANTS.

Skilful Stilt Walkers.

The troupe are not drawn up in a line at the rise of the curtain; that would never do. They drop in from the wings one by one, three feet, four feet, and so on by gradations until the astonishing height of eighteen feet is reached.

The tallest has very long stilts, the next a little shorter, till they come to no stilts at all, and in this way the peculiar effect is gained.

Great skill is needed to manage stilts of this enormous height, especially as they are enshrouded with clothing and terminated with mock feet. Also, the grotesque heads are necessarily fixed above the heads of the performers, who are thus prevented from seeing where they are going.

Photo *Hana.*

M. VOLBERT and Mdlle. SYLVA

In the "Apache Dance."

The Apaches or hooligans of Paris are despicable and villainous ruffians, a scourge to society against whom the police are apparently powerless. Hardly a week passes without some murder or robbery traceable to their notorious brotherhood—and sisterhood. Feuds among themselves are frequent, usually settled with knife or revolver, and the unhappy women under Apache domination are often victims.

In their lighter moments they dance, but in a manner horribly suggestive of their crimes.

Mons. Volbert and Mdlle. Sylva have recently reproduced this peculiar dance in London, and the performance has created a great sensation.

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"FOUND DROWNED"

A TALE OF OUR VILLAGE

By Butler Herbert.

The bar-parlour of the Red Lion, a small, low-ceilinged room, was to-day fully occupied. Twelve jurymen sat on twelve highly-polished Windsor chairs placed round the walls, while in the black-leaded grate a large fire was burning brightly. In the centre was an oak table—a genuine "gate-leg"—at which the Coroner took his seat at the end farthest from the fire.

By the same fire sat Dr. Atkins, the village medico, tall, thin, and keen-faced, his heavy fur-lined overcoat and horse-skin gloves on the chair behind betokening the presence of a motor somewhere about the premises. The remaining member of the party—in his own eyes the most important of all—was standing by the door. This was none other than the stalwart, red-faced Police Constable Anderson, now solemnly performing his duties as Coroner's officer.

The Coroner, a short, dark man of some forty years of age, compared the eight-day clock ticking gloomily in the corner with his gold repeater.

"Three o'clock," he said, turning to the constable at his elbow. "Are they all here, Anderson?"

"All here, sir," said that worthy, looking round with an air of great severity on the ring of solemn faces before him. "And the witnesses is in the taproom, waiting being called."

The Coroner glanced around the room and observed judicially:

"Gentlemen,—You are twelve true and honest men called together at the behest of our Sovereign Lord the King to inquire into the circumstances attending the finding of a man's body by one John Wilkins in a pool, belonging to Mr. Smith, near or on the main road in the village here, at seven o'clock yesterday morning.

"The body has, so the constable informs me, just been identified by one Mrs. Hopkins, from Whitville, which is, as you know, a town ten miles away. She avers it is that of her husband, Alfred Hopkins, a bricklayer by trade, who left his home last Saturday, and up till to-day—Thursday—had not been heard of. You will hear her evidence, and judge for yourselves. I will now administer the oath."

The big policeman produced a very small testament, and the first four of the jury, starting from the end nearest the door, seized it simultaneously with the right hand, while the Coroner ran over the customary formula, as he had done scores of times before. Each man then kissed the cover of the book more or less solemnly, and the same ceremony having been gone through with the other two quartettes, the perfunctory formality was over for the time being.

"Now, gentlemen, choose a foreman from

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among yourselves," said the Coroner, as the constable laid the book on the table at his elbow.

The twelve jurymen looked at one another, but no one spoke a word, or made any kind of suggestion.

"Come," said the Coroner at length, seeing that, as usual, he would have to give these free and independent Englishmen a lead, "you ought to find no difficulty in that. There's Mr. Smith here."

Farmer Smith, a stout man in fawn-coloured clothes, shook his head.

"Or Mr. Bilbrook," went on the Coroner. "I'm sure either of them would make a very good foreman."

Mr. Bilbrook, the tall, thin, elderly saddler, conspicuous among his fellow-men by the large Roman nose on his grave, severe countenance, fingered his long white beard thoughtfully, but said not a word.

"Bilbrook's the man," said Farmer Smith cheerfully.

"Aye," assented an elderly labourer, clad in his black Sunday suit. "Master Bilbrook knows the law of the land. He reads the papers, he does. I says Master Bilbrook be foreman."

Everyone agreed, or rather no one disagreed, so Mr. Bilbrook there and then entered upon his responsible duties.

"We will now," announced the Coroner, "go and view the body. It is across the road, in the cottage opposite."

The twelve, headed by Mr. Bilbrook, rose as one man and trooped out of the house, the Coroner and doctor leading the way. Constable Anderson shepherded the rear, casting, as he stepped outside, stern, official glances at certain shrill-voiced, white-aproned females who, in company with a few small boys, were hanging around the door of the Red Lion.

In five minutes the procession returned, the order of precedence being the same as before.

As soon as they entered the room, each man sat down in his original chair. Coroner's juries in country places are punctilious as to such trivial observances.

"Bring in the first witness, Anderson," commanded the Coroner.

Anderson left the room, returning almost immediately followed by a broad-shouldered, muscular, blue-eyed young farm labourer, who sat down at the table on the left hand of the Coroner.

"Give him the testament," said the latter, after a pause, to the policeman.

The witness took the oath, and after giving his name as John Wilkins, waggoner to Farmer Smith, proceeded, with the aid of the Coroner's leading questions and remarks, to tell the jury, among whom was his master, how, when he was watering his horses at seven o'clock on the previous morning, he had been startled to find the body of a man floating face downwards in the pond.

He then went on to relate how, his master being absent, he had run down to the Red Lion, where he now was, and found Blythe, the landlord, and how Blythe went across for the butcher, and how at length Mrs. Blythe came downstairs with her hair "all as it was," —whatever that might mean; the Coroner, being a married man, did not press for an explanation—"and did what all the rest ought to have done at first" (the comment was the Coroner's, witness knowing his place too well to disparage his superiors), namely, sent for the village constable; when at last the body was finally extracted from the water, and carried to an empty cottage opposite the Red Lion, where it now lay.

The doctor was the next witness. He had been sitting patiently listening, wondering the while whether the Coroner would treat the request as "contempt," or *with* contempt, if he asked permission to smoke. For the day being a close, humid one, Mrs. Blythe's cocoanut-matting smelt rather more homelike than usual as the heat of the fire drew the damp out of it.

His evidence was clear and to the point.

The corpse had been in the water for some hours. Twelve probably. Perhaps a little more, perhaps a little less. Was that of a man about fifty years of age. Perhaps more, perhaps less. Fairly well nourished. No signs of disease. Apparently a bricklayer by trade, judging from his clothes and general appearance. Hands those of a man who had never done any very hard manual labour; in fact, resembled those of the habitual tramp. Should say had been of a fresh-coloured countenance. An old scar on the right wrist.

The policeman followed. His evidence was very short. The man was a bricklayer, or bricklayer's labourer, he should say. A red handkerchief, a clay pipe, and three coppers were all that was found in his pockets. Did not know the man, but thought he had obtained satisfactory evidence to show that he was one Alfred Hopkins, a bricklayer, who had been missing for some days from a neighbouring town. The widow would give evidence. There were no marks of any struggle on the banks of the

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pond. Might have been a suicide, might have been an accident. Could not say which. Most likely the latter, as the pond was open to the road, and deep right up to the edge. The constable wiped his brow with a red-and-white spotted handkerchief as a sign that he had finished.

A new witness, of the fair sex this time, one of those exceptions which prove the rule, was now ushered in—a tall woman, with a decided stoop, of some fifty years of age, thin and spare in body and sharp of feature. She was dressed from head to foot in black of exceeding rustiness, and as she sat down in the full light, her red nose and watery eyes betrayed, at least so the observant doctor thought, a close acquaintance with ardent spirits in no niggard quantities. Moreover, with her entrance, such a strong smell of freshly-imbibed whisky pervaded the room that the Coroner shuddered to think of what the landlord's spirits must taste like, since the smell alone could be so awful; and he mentally determined there and then to confine his liquid refreshment later on to a bottle of beer—and see the label.

"Your name?" he said to the new witness briefly.

"Mary 'Opkins," answered the woman in a whining tone, which nevertheless had a suspicion of shrewishness in it, as she untied a pair of narrow black bonnet-strings. "Being the name as I was——"

But here the constable checked her utterance by pushing the testament into her hand, and the oath was administered.

"You have seen the body of the deceased?" began the Coroner, trying with irritated jerks to shake some ink down into his fountain-pen as he spoke.

"I 'ave," said Mrs. Hopkins.

"And you identified it as the body of the man who was your husband?" proceeded the questioner.

"The diseased *is* my 'usband," said Mrs. Hopkins, with an air of mild rebuke.

"How did you recognise it as your husband's?" pursued the Coroner.

"I knowed 'im the minute I set eyes on 'im," replied Mrs. Hopkins, with an air of injured dignity.

"Yes—but *how?*" persisted the Coroner, shaking his pen rather testily.

"'Ow?" repeated Mrs. Hopkins in tones of shrill asperity. "'Ow, do you say? Why, don't you think I couldn't tell my lawful 'usband as I've lived with over thirty year? Why, I could 'a' told 'im if he 'ad been a corpus for six month."

The Coroner glanced across at the doctor, who was smiling at some pleasant dissecting-room reminiscence the widow's remark had called up.

"But what I want to know, Mrs. Hopkins, is this," he said, speaking very plainly and distinctly, "by what marks or particular features do you go, when you assert that the the body is absolutely, beyond question, that of your husband?"

"I hidentified 'im by his hair," said Mrs. Hopkins somewhat impatiently.

"Ah! now we are getting at it," cried the Coroner. "Identified him by the colour of his hair," he murmured half aloud, as he wrote the words down.

But the keen-eared Mrs. Hopkins had overheard him, and forthwith interrupted in no measured terms.

"I must arst you, mister, to take down my words correct. I never said nothin' about the 'air of 'is 'ead. It was the hair of 'is happearance I were alludin' to. 'E lay there stretched out just as 'e used to lie on the sofy at home when 'e were a bit overcome like." And the speaker made a show of wiping away a non-existent tear with a black-edged, real cambric handkerchief; an anomaly probably accounted for by the fact that one of her customers—Mrs. Hopkins took in washing—had lately sustained a family bereavement.

When she had sufficiently recovered, the Coroner began again.

"What did your husband do for a living?" he asked.

"Bricklayer," said the witness.

"And did he work regularly at his trade?" was the next question.

"'E did," answered Mrs. Hopkins. "As 'ard a workin' man as ever stepped. Not but what 'e 'ad his faults; though," she added, glaring round on the inoffensive jury, "I've never yet seen the man as 'adn't, and that I will say."

"Was he in regular employment up to Saturday last, the day on which I am told he left his home?"

"'E were," said Mrs. Hopkins. "E 'ad been workin' for three months over at Ingleby on the noo schools, and 'ad drawn a tidy balance in the morning. Leastways so I heard. 'E never give me none of it."

Mr. Bilbrook, who had sat listening and stroking his long, white beard, here intervened.

"I should like at this p'int to ask the woman a question," he said to the Coroner, who nodded acquiescently.

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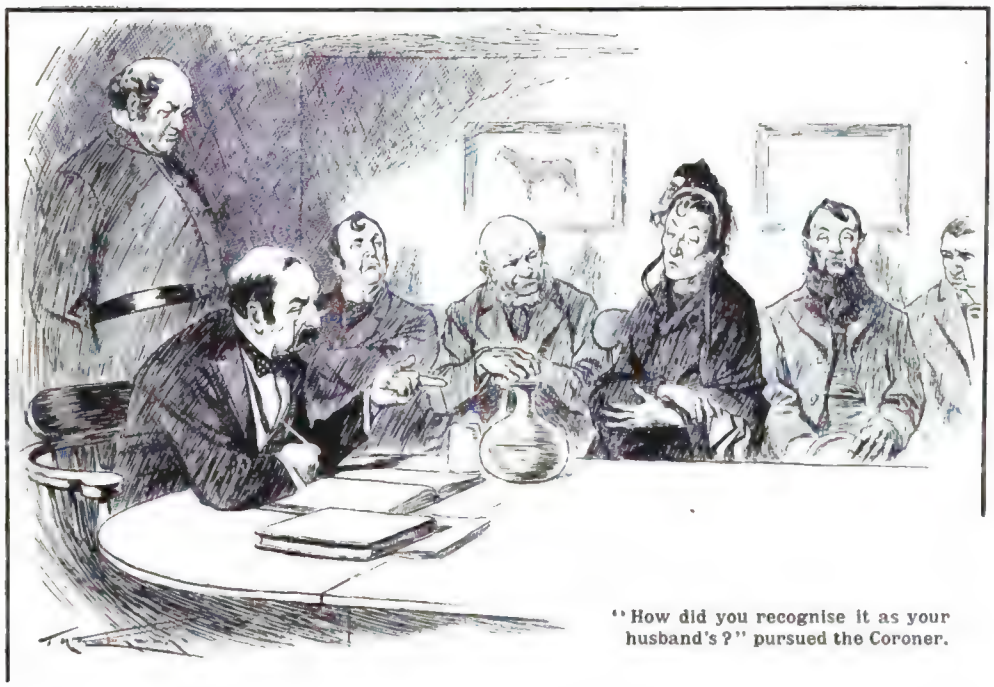

"How did you recognise it as your husband's?" pursued the Coroner.

"You say your master was a man in regular work?" said Mr. Bilbrook turning to Mrs. Hopkins.

"'E were," said the widow. "Leastways, when 'e 'ad the chance."

"Then," cried Mr. Bilbrook, looking sternly across at the doctor seated by the fire, "there's false swearing somewhere. Dr. Atkins said as how the deceased had never done no 'ard work, and you say as he 'ad," turning to the woman, while a murmur, appreciative of their foreman's acumen, arose from the rest of the jury.

The doctor had flushed up hotly at the saddler's innuendo. Then as the humour of the situation dawned on him, he smiled across at the Coroner.

"I went by his hands, Mr. Bilbrook," he quietly explained. "They were soft and tender—the palms, I mean—not hard and roughened, like those of a man who handles tools. They were like mine at the present time, and I don't earn my living by manual labour, you know," and the speaker held up a pair of shapely white hands in order to emphasise his point.

"I dunno as that allus follows," said a middle-aged butcher three chairs from Mr. Bilbrook. "When you got hold of my bad tooth with your drawing tackle last week, I know as I reckoned as how you could use your hands well for your money, doctor. I know I had to call in here on my way home for sixpenn'orth of brandy, hot, afore I felt my nateral self, like."

Everybody laughed at this except the big constable, who looked gravely indignant at this indecorous digression.

"I'll proceed," said the Coroner, when the laughter had died away. "I daresay I shall clear up this discrepancy in the evidence for you, Mr. Bilbrook, before I have finished with the witness."

"Had your husband any scars or marks on his body, Mrs. Hopkins?" he asked, as he once more shook up his fountain pen.

"Yes," said the witness, "'e 'ad. There was a scar on his left arm betwixt ilbow and wrist. I seed it many a time when 'e cleaned hisself on Sunday mornings and Bank 'Olidays."

"I suppose he came by it in pursuit of his avocation?" observed the Coroner.

"No, 'e did not," snapped Mrs. Hopkins indignantly. "'E weren't pursuin' of nowt. Alf never were a poacher or anything low of that sort. 'E got it three year ago in the Cross Keys over at Slipstone yonder. 'E and Bill Marples, a mate of his'n, tried to out one another with quart jugs. They took Bill to the 'orspital when it were finished, and Alf,'e got three months' 'ard. 'E were a terror

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when 'e were fresh, were Alf. Many's the good 'idin' 'e's given me," she concluded reminiscently.

"The clothes?" said the Coroner, "Did you identify the clothes?"

"I did," said Mrs. Hopkins. "Alf 'e allus were cord trowzis and a black coat, same as that of the corpus."

The Coroner put down his pen and leant back in his chair.

"I do not think, gentlemen," he began, "I need detain the woman any longer. Her evidence seems to establish sufficiently the identity of the deceased. I should have liked, it is true, some corroboration of it—some friend or acquaintance of Hopkins to have been present, for instance. But the woman only heard of the discovery of the body by chance, and took the first train, arriving here at half-past ten. She identifies the scar, the features, and the clothes. There is a discrepancy, it is true, with regard to the hands, between her evidence and that of Dr. Atkins. I can only explain that by saying that her ideas and those of the doctor may differ as to what constitutes hard work. We none of us agree on every point, you know, gentlemen."

"Quite true, sir," interjected Mr. Bilbrook hoarsely.

"My impression of the whole matter is," concluded the Coroner, "that the deceased went off on the spree, as they call it, on Saturday last, and, having spent nearly all his money, was making his way home across country on the night before last—perhaps inebriated, perhaps not—and being a stranger to the road, fell into the pond by some unfortunate mischance and was drowned. Yes, gentlemen, the deceased, Alfred Hopkins, was found drowned. That, I imagine, will be your verdict. You can retire and consider the evidence, if you think there is any occasion."

"No need, Mr. Coroner, no need at all," said Mr. Bilbrook as he turned to his fellow-jurymen. "Found drowned," he repeated. "That seems to me correct and akkerate. The diseased, Alfred Hopkins, come by his death by being found drowned in farmer's pit, and how he got there is unknown to the joory. Will that suit all on yer?" he asked, looking along the line of faces.

Most of the jury were looking forward to spending their forthcoming shillings "for the good of the house," so while those who agreed cried "yes," those who disagreed wisely held their peace.

Mr. Bilbrook turned to the Coroner.

"That's the verdict, sir. All being agreed."

The Coroner, who was just then engaged in some mental gymnastics in order to record the verdict in intelligible English, nodded silently. Suddenly the train of his thoughts was interrupted by a loud noise, as of someone in violent altercation with another in the passage outside the door. The voice of Blythe the landlord could be plainly heard raised in loud protestation against somebody or something.

"Anderson," snapped the Coroner to the constable, who was about to open the door, "go and stop this disturbance at once! Bring the originator of it in here. Disturbing a Coroner's Court like this! Monstrous!"

Someone outside, however, saved the constable the trouble of opening the door. Ere his hand could turn the handle it was flung open so violently that the burly man in blue was almost swept on to the top of the Coroner, and immediately afterwards a man staggered into the room. A short, thick-set man, with a red, inflamed face to whose arm the stout landlord was clinging, evidently in a state of great alarm for the reputation of his house.

Everybody looked at the newcomer. Mrs. Hopkins gave a faint scream and started up in her chair.

The man glared angrily round the room.

"What is the verdict?" he cried, before the equally angry Coroner could raise a protest.

"Found drowned," said the constable, grasping the stranger by the right arm in order to eject him forcibly. "And you'll find yourself in trouble, coming in like this."

"Stop a moment, Anderson," ordered the Coroner. "I want a word with him."

The constable obeyed, keeping, nevertheless, a restraining hand on this disturber of the peace, who promptly addressed the jury, entirely disdaining to notice the Coroner.

"'Found drownded,' is it? Then all I can say is that it's 'ard on a honest man that he should 'ave his character took away by twelve riff-raff as is fetched in off the roads by a fat-'eaded copper."

The Coroner brought his fist down on the table with a thud.

"Hold your tongue," he cried angrily. "Who is this fellow? Does anyone know him?" looking fiercely about him.

"It's Alf," said Mrs. Hopkins, with an air of plaintive resignation.

"What?" said the startled Coroner. "Your husband?"

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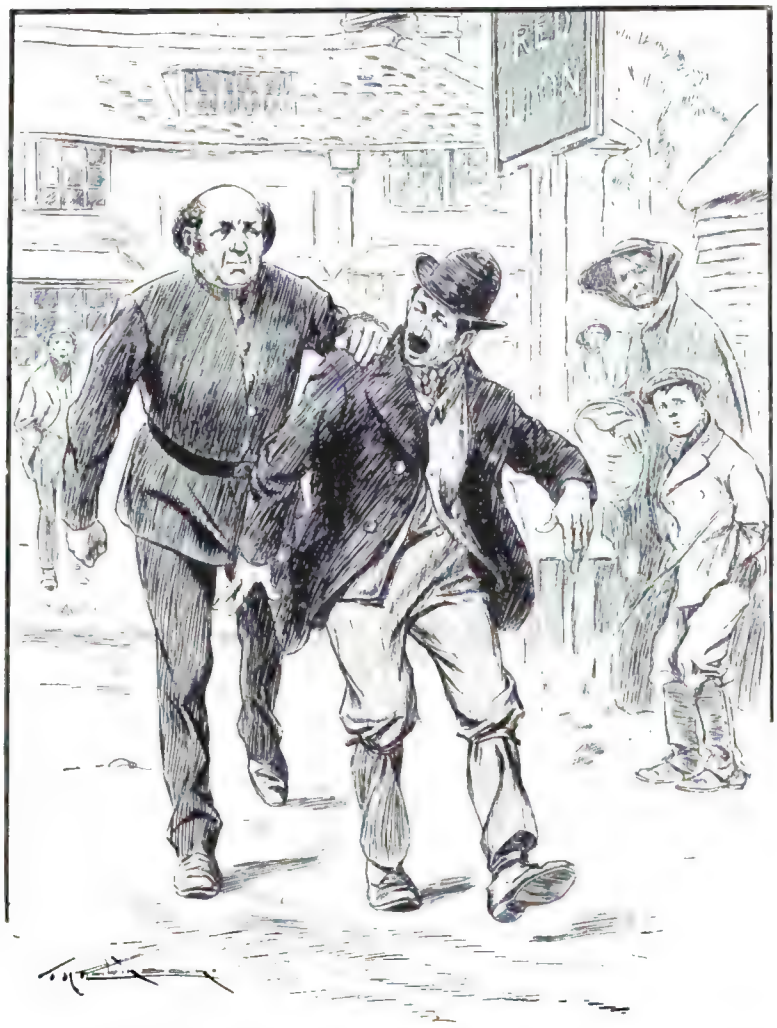
"Yes," put in the stranger, "it *is* Alf. Alfred 'Opkins, a 'spectable, 'ard-workin' man, and I wants to know what you means, all on yer, by takin' away my character?"

At this point the doctor laughed aloud, and the Coroner had some difficulty in suppressing his feelings. The rest of the audience looked very grave at this startling *dénouement*.

"'Found drownded' was your verdict, was it?" went on the bricklayer, lurching slightly as he spoke, "and in a hold cowkeeper's pit! Now do you think as how a 'spectable, 'ard-workin' man like me 'ud go and drown hisself in watter—*cold* watter?" he concluded derisively.



The complainant was straightway ejected by the willing arm of the stalwart Anderson, and started with a headlong push on his way home down the road.

"Alf," said his wife sharply, "you 'ad better be off afore the gent here 'as you gaoled. And you ought to be, an' all, a-comin' 'ere like this. Why iver couldn't you 'ave kep' away till I drawed your club money, which I was a-goin' to do as soon as iver I got the certificate. And such a buryin' as I was a-goin' to give 'im an' all! It's fair tryin' to a pore woman's feelin's to be disapp'inted in this way." And genuine tears rolled down the cheeks of "the widow" as she spoke.

"How were I to know?" Mr. Hopkins was retorting angrily, when the Coroner jerked his thumb in the direction of the door, and the complainant was straightway ejected by the willing arm of the stalwart Anderson, and started with a headlong push on his way home down the road.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Coroner, when order was once more restored, "we shall have to amend the verdict. Shall I write 'unknown man' in place of the name 'Alfred Hopkins'?"

Mr. Bilbrook nodded glumly.

"I reckon we must," he said in regretful tones. "Though it air a pity, I must say."

The Coroner made the required alteration, and then sternly addressed Mrs. Hopkins, who still kept her seat:

"How was it possible you could make such a mistake, Mrs. Hopkins? It seems to me this club money had a good deal to do with it. I've a good mind to disallow your expenses."

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"I were misled by my 'opes," said Mrs. Hopkins, with what she considered to be an air of engaging frankness. "When a woman 'as lived with a feller like Alf for nigh upon thirty year she 'as to live upon 'ope and very little else. I were that overj'yed that I clean mistook 'im, and I 'ope, sir, and gentlemen all, as you will overlook it this time, and give me a trifle to get back 'ome with."

The Coroner smiled as he reached over to a little heap of silver on the table before him and took up a half-crown.

Mr. Bilbrook picked up his soft felt hat, and, depositing sixpence in its interior, handed it to his neighbour.

"Pass it round," he remarked laconically, "and don't forget the doctor."

Quite a nice little sum was handed to Mrs. Hopkins, who rose up as she took it, and made a bad attempt at a curtsey.

"Thank you, sir, and gentlemen all," she said gratefully, adding in a loud whisper as she prepared to depart: "An', please, don't none of yer tell Alf. 'E'll want it all to go lushing with if 'e knows."

The next day, thanks to the exertion of P.C. Anderson, the corpse was satisfactorily identified, and Dr. Atkins cleared in the eyes of Mr. Bilbrook of any taint of false swearing.

It appeared that one Richard Peters, alias "Scroggins," in the pursuit of his avocation of professional cadger and petty thief—the said Richard having some small skill in the twig, bird-lime, and shop-till line—had become possessed on the day before the body was found of two half-crowns.

That night on the strength of his wealth Richard was drinking in a public-house three miles away along the road which led by the farmer's pond. At ten o'clock he had been ejected from the taproom *vi et armis*, and had, full of mild ale, staggered off into the outer darkness to find what proved to be his bitter end.

HE WAS "HAMMERED."

It was easily seen he was feeling perturbed;
There'd been first a smart rise then a sharp fall in leather;
Now his normal tranquillity had been disturbed,
In fact, he was feeling upset altogether.
You see, he did not as a general rule
Take particular note of the market quotations,
Or he might have remained quite collected and cool,
Indifferent, even, to all fluctuations.

And now we behold him, pale, moody, and sad,
At the thought of the blow he had had to endure;
After all, he had certainly cause to feel bad,
For he had been "hammered," of that he felt sure.
Not a "bull" had condoned with this wight in his fix,
Nor a "bear" sympathetic extended his flipper;
You see, he was just little Tommy, aged six,
And the leather that fell was his mother's old slipper!

Stuart Furniss.

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Old Gold Chrysanthemums

How They Performed An Introduction.

By E. Newton Bungey.

It was close by the Achilles statue that I saw her nearly every morning. She would come along with a free, graceful stride, a particularly ugly bulldog ambling at her skirt. I grew into the habit of walking that way just for the sake of meeting her, of glancing into her dark blue eyes, of seeing her pretty face flushed with health and exercise.

After awhile she began to notice me. I could tell that, for in her eyes a light of curiosity would appear, as though she were saying: "There's that man again. I wonder where he goes to each morning."

I was not flattered by this light of recognition, for I noticed that she stared with a similar sort of expression at my bull terrier. Perhaps she was comparing our looks—I could not tell.

As the weeks passed by and we still met each morning, I grew wildly anxious to make her acquaintance. I knew that no man possessed her, for I had seen her left hand one morning and noticed that the third finger was bare of rings. Slowly it dawned on me that I, who had attained the age of thirty without losing my heart, had actually fallen in love with a girl I did not know. I was perfectly miserable when a morning passed without my seeing her, and I measured my hours as from one daily vision to another.

How could I get to know her? I devoutly hoped that one morning our dogs would fall out. But that morning never came; the two animals always passed each other with an air of lordly disdain on their peculiar features. If I asked one man who the unknown was, I asked a hundred, but no one knew her. In a novel she would have dropped a book or a handkerchief, but as it was she never did anything of the kind.

Every day she grew more beautiful, or, at least, to me it seemed that she did. Every day I fell deeper in love with her. And every day saw me just as far off my desire as ever.

Then a morning went by without my seeing her, and another, and yet a third, until a week passed by. Then I told my miserable self that she must have gone away for a holiday. I had actually put off my own holiday so as not to miss seeing her, and, in desperation, I now fled across to Dinard. But I was profoundly miserable, despite the alluring charms of this gay resort.

Three weeks later saw me passing the Achilles statue again, and, joy! I saw her once more. It was like manna in the wilderness, like an oasis in the desert. But still I did not know her; still she glanced from me to my dog, her gaze resting longer on the latter, by the way.

Really, I think I should have made a fool of myself if chance had not thrown a

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fortunate opportunity in my path. I had seen her as usual in the morning, and in the afternoon I happened to be strolling along Kensington High Street, when I saw her again, getting out of a motor brougham.

She went into Foster's, the florist's, and about five minutes later she came out again, got into the motor, and was driven away.

Now, I've known old Foster ever since I was up at Oxford. I was always going into his shop and ordering bouquets and all that sort of thing for my people, and he used to say that we were his best customers.

I will not bore you with a repetition of my conversation with Foster, for I had rather a job to get him to do what I wanted. You see, a brilliant inspiration had come to me, and if Foster would do what I wanted I fancied I saw a chance of getting to know *her*.

I jumped to the conclusion that she had ordered some flowers. This was correct; she had ordered a bouquet of old-gold chrysanthemums, to be sent round after dinner. Her name was Ailsa, and I immediately knew that it was my favourite name.

Miss Ailsa Talbot, 3 Crescent Gardens, Kensington. That was her name and address.

What I wanted old Foster to do was to deliver the bouquet at my home in mistake—it was to be put down to the idiocy of a messenger-boy. After considerable persuasion he agreed, and I went home exhilarated, feeling as though I were walking on air.

About half-past seven the bouquet arrived bearing the label, "Miss Talbot," though the boy had strict orders to deliver it into my hands. I was seated with my people at dinner when it came, but I had no appetite afterwards. I took the flowers to my room and deliberately crushed them and disarranged them.

This may, at first sight, seem idiotic, but the astute reader will probably understand my reasons. You see, if the bouquet had been all in order I could have done no more than send it to Miss Talbot by a servant with a message that it had been delivered in error at my home. But as it was all disarranged, quite by accident, of course, the least I could do would be to go and purchase a similar bouquet and call on Miss Talbot with it, in order to apologise.

I thought it was a very deep and well thought out scheme, and I rather prided myself on it. So, a few moments later saw the bouquet and myself in a hansom. We were driven to Foster's, where I got a new bouquet of the same flowers in a remarkably short time. As a matter of fact it had been got ready beforehand for me. Then I drove on to No. 3 Crescent Gardens, and demanded to see Miss Talbot. A ridiculous footman asked me my name, and staggered me somewhat, for I had overlooked this development. However, I pulled myself together.

"Tell Miss Talbot I have come from Mr. Foster," I said.

He showed me into a sort of ante-room, where I waited nervously, the two bouquets in my hands. A few moments later the door opened and Ailsa entered. I gasped, for she was clad in a ball dress, a silken wrapper over her shoulders, and she looked even more lovely than ever I had seen her.

When she saw me her eyes opened wide with surprise, and I could see she remembered me. Then she caught sight of the bouquets, and a puzzled look crossed her face.

"You have come from Mr. Foster?" she asked.

"I have come to apologise for an error," I said. "Your bouquet was delivered, evidently by mistake, at my home, and I had the misfortune to have an accident with it, as you see."

I held the forlorn bouquet aloft with a gesture that savoured of triumph.

"Yes?" she said.

"Under the circumstances I could do no less than get it replaced as best I could, and bring the fresh bouquet to you," I went on, astonishing myself with the ease with which I prevaricated. "I thought I would like to know that you have suffered no inconvenience, and that the fresh bouquet is as you wish."

"I am much obliged to you," she said. "Thank you, the flowers are just what I wanted. I love old-gold chrysanthemums."

I laid the bouquets on the table and stood still. I was horribly nervous. I did not know what to say next, and I felt that I must appear a ridiculous idiot. But Miss Talbot came to my rescue. I fancied she pitied me.

"I don't know what I should have done but for you," she said.

My guilty conscience smote me lustily, and my face would have out-peonied a peony.

"You see," she went on, "I am going to Lady Masterman's dance, and I wanted to wear the flowers there."

A wild and idiotic idea came to me, and before I could check my tongue, the following absurd words rolled off it:

"I'm going there, too. I shall see you there."

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"Are you really?" she asked. Then in, an ingenuous manner, she went on: "What a lovely dog that is of yours, I have often admired it in the park."

That oiled my tongue, and I talked dog with much ease until a clock chimed half-past eight.

"Oh, I must go and get ready," she cried.

Ready? I thought. Whatever else is there for you to do? You surely cannot look more charming.

But what does a mere bachelor know of the mysteries of preparing for a ball?

"I shall see you there," I said, wondering how on earth I should prove my words.

"Yes," she said, as I walked out of the door and gave myself into the care of a footman. "And thank you again for bringing the flowers."

I wandered home blithely, yet blindly, continually knocking against other pedestrians and apologising profusely. You see, my thoughts were entirely taken up with the memory of Ailsa, and the problem of how I should get into Lady Masterman's dance that night.

But who the dickens was Lady Masterman? I had never heard of the estimable lady. I presumed she was estimable. In fact, everybody was estimable that night.

"Blake will know, at any rate," I muttered.

Blake was, and is, my bodyguard. He acted as my valet, as a general rule, though he filled various offices on my behalf. Blake knew all sorts of things, and what he didn't know he invented.

As a matter of fact he knew Lady Masterman's house. It was less than half-a-mile away, so the trusty chap ran round there to find out if the dance was to be at the house or elsewhere. He came back presently to say it was at the house, and commenced at nine o'clock. I looked at my watch; it registered twenty minutes short of nine. You will understand my high opinion of Blake, therefore, when I tell you that he had me dressed and out of the house by five minutes past nine.

I walked slowly to the scene of the ball, and found a string of carriages drawn up outside. Numerous people crowded in, and I heard a gorgeous flunkey screaming out their names in a hoarse, raucous, cockney twang.

"How the dickens am I to get in?" I muttered, as I walked past the house in the shadow on the other side of the road.

She was clad in a ball dress, a silken wrapper over her shoulders, and she looked even more lovely than ever I had seen her.

As I stood hesitating, a private motor omnibus fussed up and a large party alighted, about ten people altogether.

Here was my chance, I thought, and I crossed the road and entered the house on the heels of the party. The leading member of the latter gave a card to the flunkey and he bawled out;

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"Mr. and Mrs. Rawnsley and party."

I stalked past the footman, feeling that he was eyeing me suspiciously, but evidently he decided that I was one of Mr. Rawnsley's party, as I had intended him to. A still more gaily attired flunkey took my hat and coat, and I joined the mob at the foot of the stairs.

On the broad landing above stood the hostess, receiving her guests. Obviously it would have been bad policy to endeavour to carry this second line of defences at once, and I glanced around to see if there were any way of escape. I sighed with relief as I saw an open room adjoining, in which a number of men were smoking and talking. Summoning all my nerve I stalked boldly into this refuge, seated myself in a chair, lit a cigarette, and with a magazine in my hand strove to look quite at ease.

Really, however, I was studying the various guests I could see, hoping to observe someone I knew. But everybody I saw was strange to me, so I was forced to remain in my retreat till I heard the band begin to play. Then I strolled out and saw to my delight that Lady Masterman had left her coign of vantage.

Then I made for the ballroom, sneaked in, and hid myself in a corner, gazing eagerly around for Ailsa. My heart leapt as suddenly I caught sight of her seated alone, and I immediately wormed my way to her.

"Here I am, you see," I said with consummate impudence, as though she and I were old friends.

She greeted me with a pleasant smile, and, emboldened by this, I grew even more impudent, and sat down beside her. To veil the nervousness which I began to feel, I plunged headlong into the idiotic small talk which is peculiar to balls. Quite gravely I discussed various plays and books, and I found to my pleasure that Ailsa was well read and had original tastes.

"By the way," she said, "the author of 'A Society Pariah,' Elliot Graves, is to be here to-night. I believe he is the *pièce de résistance.*"

"Really," I replied.

"Yes. The Mastermans are rather proud of having acquired such a lion."

"They must be, Miss Talbot," I said.

My mention of her name caused her to look up quickly at me.

"Do you know," she said—a smile on her face which rendered her absolutely enchanting—"you have a distinct advantage over me. I really don't know your name."

At that very moment a short, stout young man, with a blotched complexion, bore down on us. I had previously observed him and discovered that he was the eldest of the Masterman brood.

"Ah, here you are," he said in tones of relief. "We didn't know you were here, Mr. Graves. The mater and guv'nor were half afraid you weren't going to turn up."

"Oh!" gasped Ailsa, staring at me with wide open eyes.

"You are making a mistake," I said in low tones, feeling that the fat was in the fire with a vengeance, for when they discovered I was not Elliot Graves, they would be sure to want to know who I was and how I had got in.

The blotched-face Masterman guffawed.

"Jolly good!" he cried. "Not yourself, eh, Mr. Graves? Come along, this isn't a scene in one of your books, you know."

With that he caught hold of my arm and, before I could make any resistance, Sir William Masterman, a retired jam manufacturer, was shaking my hand enthusiastically.

"Proud to meet you, Mr. Graves," he said.

Lady Masterman behaved in a similar manner, and the next instant I was the centre of an admiring group, the members of which were all of the opinion that I was Elliot Graves, the author. Afterwards I discovered that there was a considerable likeness between us.

"Don't put me in your next book, will you, Mr. Graves," simpered a fashion-plate model, a coy smile playing over her enamel.

What on earth was I to do? Thanks to that fatuous eldest son I was landed in a most awkward predicament. However was I to explain that I was not Elliot Graves? Supposing the real man were on his way across the room now? I went hot and cold as I bubbled forth inane remarks, waiting in dread for a loud voice to announce—"Mr. Elliot Graves."

And wherever I looked, I did not see a familiar face. There was no one to vouch for my identity. I mentally confounded Elliot Graves and all his works, also the Masterman collection.

"Pr'aps you'll lead the cotillion with Lady Masterman," said her husband.

I lied readily, stating that I was suffering from a bruised ankle which prohibited me from the delights of the dance.

Really, I never knew before that evening what an adept I was at prevarication.

During the cotillion, though, I did the wisest thing I could do under the circumstances. I managed to sneak away unobserved

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into a side room, and by devious paths I reached the hall, got my hat and coat, and fled into the night.

Barely had my feet touched the pavement ere I heard a footman announce "Mr. Elliot Graves." My voice trembled as I hailed a hansom and told the man to drive like the deuce to my home.

Once in my bedroom I sent Blake for a B. and S. whilst I collapsed into an easy-chair. Confound Elliot Graves! Whatever would Ailsa think of me? Should I ever be able to explain matters to her? She would take me for an adventurer.

I did not sleep at all well that night, and on the following morning I haunted the Achilles statue until I caught sight of Ailsa coming along. She saw me and at once the colour left her face. For a second she regarded me with a haughty stare, and then swept past, her nose in the air, absolutely disdaining my salute.

—— Elliot Graves!

But I could not let her go like this. I would risk another snub rather. So I raced after her and reached her side.

"Miss Talbot," I said. "Please let me explain."

"No explanation is necessary," she said frigidly, but I saw curiosity in her eyes, and persevered.

"I told young Masterman he had made a mistake. You heard me, surely?"

"Yes, I did," she confessed, and her tone was softer.

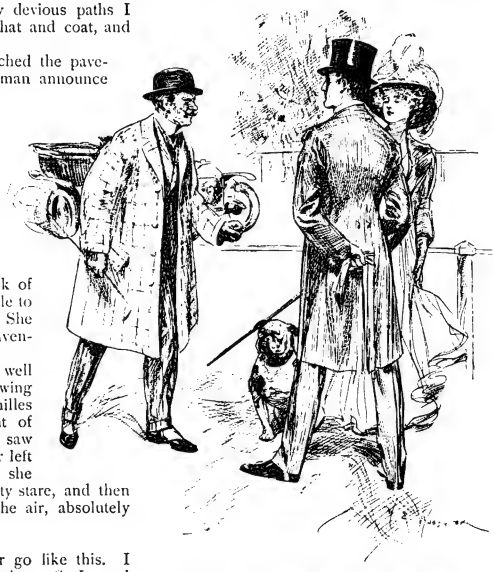
"He wouldn't listen to me, and I was forced into an unpleasant predicament. Really, the only way out was flight; explanations would have been so absurd."

"Yes, they would have been funny," she said, and smiled for the first time since I had met her. "But no one knew who you were or how you got in. They came down on me and you drove me to diplomatic rejoinders which were hardly true. I did my best, though."

"You defended me?" I cried, my heart leaping.

"I tried to."

Who should turn up at that precise moment



"Ah, so now I've got you," he blustered. "I demand an instant explanation."

but the Masterman of the blotched countenance.

"Ah, so now I've got you," he blustered. "I demand an instant explanation. You made an entry into my father's house last night under false pretences. I have half a mind to give you in charge."

Anger made his peculiar complexion look so like a coloured map that I had to laugh, whereat a smothered swear left his lips.

"Remember in whose company you are," I said, half lifting my cane.

He made a step backwards and I turned away. At that moment Blake came up with the motor. He told me afterwards he suspected trouble and thought I should be glad to drive away.

"Are you ready to drive, my lord?" he asked.

"My lord?" gasped Masterman, whilst Ailsa's face wore the same expression as when I was addressed as "Elliot Graves."

"Here is my card," I said, addressing

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Masterman. "My solicitors are Lexton & Lexton of 4 Drayton's Inn. If you have any complaint to make, please make it to them."

"Complaint, my lord," he said with an unpleasant, fawning air. "It was only my little joke. We should be very happy to see you again whenever you like to call."

"Good-morning," I said, raising my hat.

He hesitated, but I turned my back and began to talk to Ailsa. I heard him slouch away a moment later.

A victoria passed by containing a friend of my mother, Mrs. de Langue. I raised my hat and Ailsa bowed.

"Do you know the De Langues?" we said together.

"I'm going to her 'At Home' this afternoon," Ailsa said.

I knew the mater was bound to be going, so I said:

"So am I?"

"And what *rôle* will you assume this time?" Ailsa asked slyly.

"My mother's son," I replied. "She is the Duchess of Leston."

"Is she really? I've met her ever so many times," Ailsa cried, and for some absurd reason we both began to laugh.

And to think of all I'd been through to get to know Ailsa when my own mother could have introduced us!

The bulldog and the bull terrier are great chums now. They walk side by side nearly every morning.

\+ + + + +

ELSIE'S POCKET-HANDKERCHIEF.

From the hats which crown her tresses
To the shoes upon her feet,
Oh! was ever girl so dainty
As Elsie, or so sweet?
But there's one thing, this, about her,
To the best of my belief
She never has a pocket for
Her pocket-handkerchief.

So she tucks it in her waistband,
Or puts it up her sleeve,
Or holds it in her hand, perhaps;
You hardly would believe,
Wherever Elsie harbours it,
'Tis never to be found;
And wherever Elsie isn't,
There her handkerchiefs abound.

Among the sofa cushions,
In the corners of the chairs,
Within the grand piano,
At the bottom of the stairs,
In the middle of a flower-bed,
On a novel's open leaf,
With each and all of these you'll find
A crumpled handkerchief.

Wherever Elsie goes she leaves
A handkerchief behind,
And sometimes when it's vanished 'tis
Impossible to find.
When it falls into the fender,
Then the rest is very brief—
Comes a little red-hot cinder . . .
Gone is Elsie's handkerchief.

And one day, along the river,
I met Elsie bowed with grief,
And she ran up crying: "Have you
Seen my best lace handkerchief?"
Then I caught and held her tightly,
Whisp'ring: "Elsie, I'm the thief.
But you stole my heart, you know, dear,
So I stole your handkerchief!"

Constance Meadows.

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Hints on How to Photograph Pussy.

By Reginald A. R. Bennett, M.A. (Oxon).

(*Illustrated with Photographs taken by the Author.*)

Many are the uses of the cat, as, *item* one, the cat catches mice, *item* two, the cat gives a homey look to the hearth, *item* three, the cat is company to the old maid, *item* four, the cat inspires the comic artist, and *item* five—most important of all from a certain point of view—the cat gives great opportunities to the camera. With the possible exceptions of lovely ladies and pretty children there can hardly be a better model for the photographer than the cat.

In photographing cats, three virtues are called for, and to emphasise them, I will set them out in lines by themselves:

1. Fondness for animals.
2. Unlimited patience.
3. The power to seize chances.

You cannot take a good photograph of a cat unless you are fond of animals—of cats in particular—for otherwise you will not understand your model, you will not see the meaning of its poses and antics, nor will you appreciate its beauty to the full—its grace and its litheness, the wonderful qualities and properties of its fur, or the inherent savageness hidden beneath its pleasant purr or its velvet claws. In truth, there is a great deal more in a cat than meets the eye of the cat-hater.

"What has become of mother?"

It is curious how many people dislike cats. Shylock, an astute money-lender, said truly—"there are some that are mad if they behold a cat." Henry III., of France, fainted away whenever he caught sight of the royal pussy. Lord Roberts is credited with an aversion from cats, with many other brave men, who could never make a great success of cat photography.

Everyone who has to deal with

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cats knows that they have wills of their own, and they are by no means to be coerced into taking up pretty poses before the camera. Anyone who has yet to learn this need only devote half-an-hour to attempting to make a restless kitten assume a position the necessity for which it is unable to perceive.

Certainly it is a virtue to the credit of cat photography that it cultivates patience. I need not here enter fully into the advantages of possessing patience; but I may, perhaps, be allowed to remark that the patience acquired by cat-photography cannot fail to prove valuable in all other studies and sports.

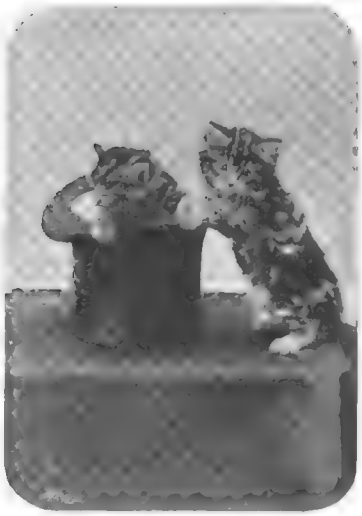
And this applies to the third ethical requirement, the power to seize chances. Cats' poses change incessantly; it is quite possible you may have to wait forty minutes before your model assumes the pose you are looking for, and unless, when it does so, you are instantly ready to press the button or bulb, it is more than probable that you will have to wait another forty minutes for another opportunity.

"Now, look pleasant, please!"

In order to be able to seize a chance, a special virtue must be developed—the power to be able to make a shrewd guess as to how the scene appears on the ground glass, irrespective of how you see it. It is trying, on developing the plate, to find that some small object essential to the success of the picture, is out of sight, because the camera has been looking at the object from a different point of view from that of the operator. This is likely to happen, because in cat photography you must put your camera close to your objects, and a very small amount of movement may make a very great difference in what the camera sees.

"Is it good to eat?"

(To obtain this picture the "moth" has to be a set specimen, a real live one being hopeless for the purpose.)



Having a game with their master's hat.

Apart from moral virtues, in photographing the cat three practical requirements are called for, which also I will emphasise by display:

1. Good light.
2. Rapid plates.
3. Special development.

Now good light does not necessarily mean brilliant sunshine. Light on a bright but cloudy day is more intense practically than on a sunshiny one. It is impossible to take a good cat photograph in full sunlight; and on a cloudless summer day the shade is by no means so effective for a short exposure as when the sun is gently shaded by clouds which, however, reflect the light to the earth. Extremely rapid plates are essential, because the cat moves so quickly. It is best not to attempt to keep the cat quite still even for a second, but to focus with a large stop or full aperture, wait with patience, seize your chance when it comes and

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"I wonder if you really *are* stuffed?"

trust to luck. As the animal is not moving with railroad speed across the line of sight, it is not necessary to give shorter exposure than one-fifteenth or one-twenty-fifth of a second. The longer the exposure that can be given (short of over-exposure) the better for bringing out the qualities of the fur.

One point is to use a noiseless shutter. The click of an ordinary shutter sometimes will make a nervous cat start enough to cause indistinctness in the picture.

As to development, plenty of time and plenty of water are the special requirements. A cat photograph should be developed slowly with a diluted developer. It is astounding what a difference the addition of plenty of water makes to the development of plates briefly exposed. A diluted developer brings out the details of the picture without unduly blocking the high-lights—thus avoiding too strong contrasts.

A photograph of a cat and nothing but a cat is apt to be tame; story pictures are more interesting, as, for example, when your cat is pictured peering eagerly into a gold-fish globe, or playing with the knitter's ball of wool. Elaborate settings to scenes are unnecessary; a kitchen or a backyard will serve perfectly for a studio. Accessories to the scene may be of the simplest character: thus, all the pictures accompanying this article were aranged on a piece of board two feet long by one foot wide. In one case, as you see, the board served as a larder shelf, in another as the floor of a loft covered with straw, in a third, as the top of a dining-room table; yet the pictures were all taken out of doors. In one picture, there appears a fence. This was merely the top of a box a few inches square. In another picture, a moth is seen hovering. This was a set specimen, supported by invisible means. A live one was naturally impossible.

Our Next Door Neighbour.
(*The fence on which this cat is leaning is really the top of a box set on edge, with the kitten on the other side.*)

The pessimist and the optimist.

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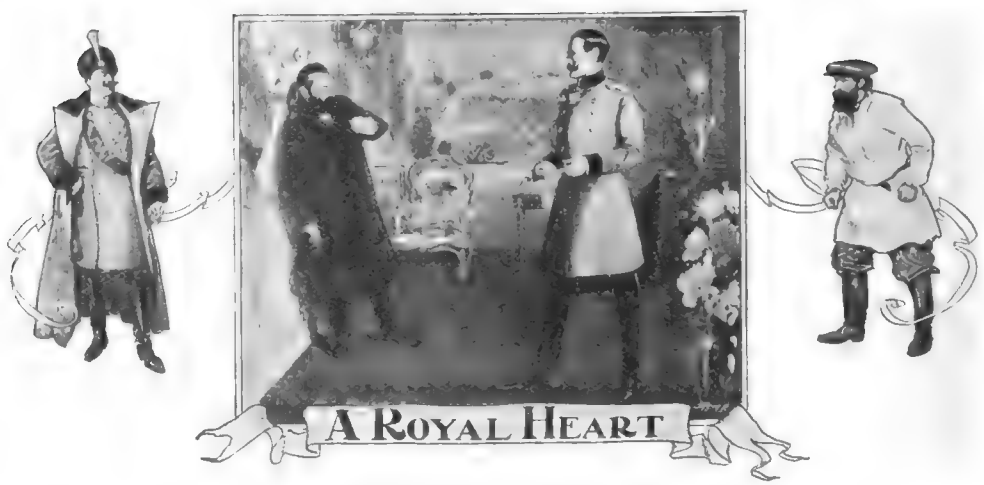

A Revolutionary Story.

By Arthur Scott Craven and J. D. Beresford.

I.

"Ah! Sergius! One thing more!"

"Highness?"

"The Volstroma function."

"It will not be safe for Your Highness to attend in person."

"Not safe? Pooh! Why not?"

"Highness, the town, indeed, the whole province, is much disaffected. Many arrests are being made and all suspects kept under close supervision; but it is impossible to guard against every contingency. So I have made arrangements, Highness, for Paul Kirschneff to represent your person, as he has done before, during the public ceremony at Volstroma. It is easy in this case since Your Highness is not known in Volstroma."

"Ah, well!" Prince Vassili leant forward over the table, "I will attend the ceremony on Thursday in person. In future I intend to live in Volstroma."

No one knew better than Sergius the futility of opposing the decisions of the young Prince Vassili, yet the declaration of his purpose to live in Volstroma was of such great significance that the steward was unable to suppress all sign of his dismay.

"And Her Royal Highness, the Princess, she will also go—to *live* in Volstroma?" he ejaculated.

Vassili rose to his feet. "She will," he replied shortly, and signified to Sergius that the interview was at an end.

Vassili had the splendid virtue of perfect courage, and was apt to be impatient of any weakness in those not endowed with his own great fearlessness.

Sergius had no choice but to accept his dismissal. But at the door he paused—an idea had occurred to him.

"Highness, I had forgotten," he said apologetically, "there is a man below, calling himself Ivan Karenin. He wishes to see Your Highness, and says he has much important information for you concerning Volstroma that he will deliver to no one but yourself."

Sergius paused. He had not intended to inform his master of the stranger's importunity; had, indeed, threatened the persistent caller with dire penalties if he continued to beg an audience; but now, Sergius thought, his information might possibly act as a deterrent upon Prince Vassili.

"Admit him," replied the Prince carelessly. "He may be of use to me in my investigations."

A few minutes later the stranger was ushered into the presence of the Grand Duke Vassili.

"You have some information for me?" asked the Prince.

"Yes, Highness," returned the newcomer nervously.

He was rather a small man, this Ivan

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Karenin, with an intellectual face marred by signs of irresolution and weakness. He was of a type that cannot combat the perpetual strain of harassment and fear; that is too imaginative and introspective to meet a long-impending danger.

"Very well. You may speak. Say all that you have to say," said the Prince.

"Forgive me, Your Highness," said Karenin, "are we safe here from the fear of being overheard? Your steward, who mistrusts me, has just had me searched, so that there is no danger to be apprehended from me."

Vassili frowned. The precautions of Sergius offended him; they seemed to him so childish and unnecessary.

"It was not by any orders of mine that you were searched," he said to Karenin. "My steward shall be severely reprimanded. We will go into the farther room. You will not be overheard there." And Vassili, having locked the door of the big outer room, preceded his visitor into the smaller apartment at the end of the suite.

"Now," he said, seating himself, "what is it you have to say?"

"Your Highness," Karenin began uncertainly, "I have a long story to tell you, but be patient; it concerns your own safety. It is necessary that I should tell you—everything."

"I am not concerned as to my own safety," replied Vassili, "but go on with your story."

"Your Highness, I am a suspect. I have been in Siberia. I was only twenty-five when I was transported, and I was there nine years; two years ago I escaped."

"You are safe as far as I am concerned," interrupted Vassili. "What have you come to say?"

"There is a plot against Your Highness. If you take part in the procession at Volstroma on Thursday you will be assassinated."

"How do you know this?" Vassili's tone was hard and contemptuous.

"I was to act as an emissary from our society, Highness. Our agents in Volstroma are poor workmen—simple, but very fierce, very much in earnest. They have been watched and trained carefully by us for many years, but have never been suspected. They are regarded by the police as being harmless. They have been taught not to express violent opinions among their neighbours."

"Ah! Can you tell me their names—where they live?"

Vassili was bending over the sheet of paper he had laid before him, intent on some aimless pattern that he pricked out with his pencil. A scheme was forming in his mind, a resolution. Then, willing to give Karenin one more chance, he added:

"Consider one moment, what it is you are doing. You are basely betraying three men—according to your account, men who are both simple and ignorant. You are condemning them to death, or, worse still, to Siberia, in order that you may live at your ease in England. Is it not better for you to die than to do this?"

"Highness!" Karenin's voice took on a note of supplication. "We have heard of you as a man of peace, of gentleness, though of great courage. It is because of your popularity that you have been singled out, since the mark will be a greater one. But I have come here to save you as well as myself, and I do not believe that you will allow these fanatic peasants to suffer, you will merely frustrate their design——"

"That will be at my discretion," broke in Vassili, whose purpose was now determined. "Who are these tools of your society?"

"One Michael Petrovitch and his son, Simon, Highness. They are shoemakers, and live in a hovel on the Moscow Road. With them is Nikita Antonitch, a chemist, in the town. They are to meet me in the cottage of Petrovitch on Wednesday evening at seven o'clock. There are in the house besides only Simon's wife, Marya, and her infant, a boy. Their hovel is easily found. It is the last in the town on that road, and is much poorer than the neighbouring houses. It will doubtless soon be done away with."

"Can you describe the three men to me—give me any details of their personal appearance?"

"No, Highness. I have never seen them."

"And have they any knowledge of you—any description of you?"

"No, Highness. This ring, my sole credential, has been described to them. That I can give you." And Karenin took an engraved gold ring from his finger and placed it before the Prince.

Vassali glanced carelessly at the ring, and pushed it aside.

"Are there no other signs?" he asked. "No form of greeting, no handshake?"

"No, Highness. None of these three men is within the Circle. There is no safeguard more secure than simplicity in dealing with such."

Vassili pushed his chair back from the table and stood up.

"Ivan Karenin," he said, "you were right

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when you said I would not allow these ignorant men to suffer. But you realise, I suppose, that your treachery must be made plain to them?"

"Yes, Highness," returned Karenin wincing, "I realise that, but I have done with the society—I shall go now to England or America, where the opinions of my old associates will not concern me."

"No, Ivan Karenin," Vassili's tone was that of a judge pronouncing sentence. "You are a man who will never be safe, therefore I will not send you to another country to work more mischief. You are a double traitor, Ivan Karenin, a traitor to Russia and to your own cause; there is but one punishment for you—the punishment of death."

For a few moments there was silence. Ivan Karenin, shrinking back against the wall, was watching with a fascinated intensity the imposing figure of the Prince.

Vassili had taken a small revolver from a drawer in the writing-table. There was a steadiness and purpose in his cool, deliberate actions that gave no doubt as to his intention, and Karenin knew with an absolutely certain knowledge that what this man had determined he would carry out.

At the last some flash of his old defiance returned to the doomed man; he drew himself up, and said in a voice that wavered somewhat, despite his strenuous endeavours at self-possession:

"Shoot, tyrant, I defy you!"

Then Vassili fired.

Sergius heard the shot in the corridor, and, calling continuously for help, began to batter desperately at the outer door of the suite.

It was opened to him, suddenly, by the Prince.

"There is a man in the farther room," he said quietly. "He is dead. Make arrangements for the necessary inquiry. I will give all the evidence that may be required. See that the matter is attended to at once, as I leave for Volstroma on Tuesday night—it is essential that I arrive there before six o'clock on Wednesda

II.

Michael Petrovitch was standing at the open door of his cottage, listening intently to the dull reverberations of a great gun that boomed persistently from the far side of the town. The rain of the afternoon had chilled into a wet snow, and the moan of the east wind gave promise of still colder weather before morning—the first bite of winter.

Michael was counting the detonations of the distant salute, checking the account on his broad, distorted fingers.

Within the cottage Simon Michaelovitch, his son, was seated at the rough table, staring vacantly at the wall before him, his slow mind striving to understand the meaning of the purpose he had chosen, hardly conscious of the perplexed questioning of the young wife, who leant over him, anxious, and fearful.

"Ah, the Royal Salute!" Michael's counting has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and he comes into the cottage, and shuts out, at last, the night and the snow. "The Duke's merry-making, eh! Simon?" he says. "Merry-making?"

"Where's Nikita Antonitch?" asks Marya. "Why doesn't *he* come?"

"Yes. He's late! He's late! It's past seven," replies Michael.

"Yes, he's late," repeats Simon. "And who's to talk to——"

"Ivan Karenin," breaks in Michael quickly. "Don't forget that's his name, now, Ivan Karenin."

"Ivan Karenin," repeats Simon, as one who learns a lesson.

"Ay! Ivan Karenin, the teacher," continues Michael, tenderly drawing a worn and tattered little volume from his inner pocket. "Listen to what he says in his book, Simon. 'If we would be free, we must be willing, each and any of us, to die for the cause. We must remember that by our sacrifice we may save millions.' Think of that, Simon, you and me may save millions. Isn't it wonderful? Ay, and wonderful, too, that Ivan Karenin, the teacher, should be here under this roof to-night. Ah! it's a great night for us, Simon, a great night."

"Is it the Grand Duke Vassili, father?" Marya asks. "Is it him that's to—to go to-morrow?"

"Ah! the Duke to-morrow!" says Michael eagerly, the light of a simple fanaticism coming into his eyes. "Him to-morrow, next month another, and then another, and—and so on. They'll go one after another, eh? until they're afraid of us, afraid of *us*. We'll get what's ours then; the right to live—the right to live!"

"I've seen Prince Vassili once, in Petersburg," says Marya thoughtfully.

"Tell us!" Simon is proud of his wife's knowledge of the world; neither he nor his father ever having been outside the province in which they were born. "Tell us! What's he like?"

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"Oh, fine!" replies Marya, lost in retrospect. "He doesn't look like one of us, he's so grand, so proud."

"Grr!" interjects Michael contemptuously.

"I'm sorry for him—almost sorry he's got to die," continues Marya. "He's so different from us."

"Tchah!" bursts out Michael, strongly resentful of such a feminine weakness as pity for the man he regards as tyrant and oppressor, but he is interrupted by the sound of the outside shutters being thrown back from the window, and turns hastily to see a face peering into the room.

"That's him—Nikita," says Simon excitedly, making a gesture of invitation in the direction of the window, then, as the shutters are hurriedly closed again, he moves quickly to the door and opens it.

It is Nikita Antonitch, the chemist, who enters; he pushes his way in breathlessly, and, slamming the door behind him, puts up the heavy bar that serves for a lock.

"It's all up," he gasps. "All up. We're done—discovered!" And then, in answer to the vehement medley of questions vociferated by his three listeners, he continues, still breathlessly:

"Ivan Karenin's taken! I heard two men speaking in the shop an hour ago—no names mentioned—but it must be Ivan Karenin—I know it. Now——"

"It's false," breaks in Michael, with fierce scorn. "Ivan Karenin taken? That fox who crept through the bars of Siberia. I don't believe it. Na, na, he's got the brains has Ivan Karenin."

"It's true, it's true," replies Nikita earnestly. "The police may be here at any moment." And from force of habit he glances fearfully at the window as he speaks. "We must destroy everything. Get the papers, get the papers, we have no time!"

Simon has been standing, half dazed, with Marya clinging to him in undisguised fear, but at this prospect of some definite work he rouses himself, and replying stolidly: "Steady, Nikita—I'll get the papers," he goes over to the simple hiding-place in which the few letters and committal documents in their possession have been kept.

The hiding-place is no more than a false wooden back in the small tool rack that holds their cobbler's tools, and Simon, with a workman's deftness, quickly extricates the papers.

"Why are you so late?" asks Marya, as they all stand round Nikita who kneels before the little cobbler's stove, hastily glancing at each paper before he thrusts it into the flame.

"I went to the station," he says. "I walked about as though I had business there—listening."

"But you heard nothing?" puts in Michael.

"No! but that doesn't count. It's no evidence one way or the other. The place was all bustle with the arrival of the Duke's baggage—ten times more than you could get into this house—I should have heard nothing if twenty Ivan Karenins had been taken. Besides, the police work quietly. Now," concludes Nikita, his work of destruction accomplished, "let's have out my little machine—handled quietly, we can burn it as easily as this paper."

"Ah!" replies Simon; then a sudden thought comes to his dull brain. "What about that book of father's?" he asks, "Ivan Karenin's book?"

"Of course. That's evidence," flashes Nikita. "That must be burnt." And he turns authoritatively to Michael.

"Ivan Karenin's book? No!" thunders Michael, instinctively clutching at the pocket that hides the precious volume.

"Yes, yes," responds Nikita. "The police may be here any moment."

"I'm not afraid, Nikita"—Michael draws himself up proudly—"I'm not afraid. If the police find it, they will find it on me."

For a moment Nikita stands irresolute, then Simon says:

"It's no good, Nikita. It's the old man's Bible."

"Well—my little machine first, anyway," agrees Nikita, but as he goes over with Simon to the big oven that is built into the corner of the room, he wears a look that says he still has designs upon this morsel of incriminating evidence.

The hiding-place of Nikita's little machine is more cunningly contrived than that of the papers, though a poor enough protection, maybe, against a police investigation,

The bomb is secreted in a little pit dug into the rough concrete that supports the heavy hearth. It takes the combined strength of Nikita and Simon to lift this broad slab of stone, and they have hardly begun to get a purchase on it with two small crowbars when they are startled by a sharp rap at the door.

For a moment there is intense silence. The sweat bursts out suddenly on Nikita's forehead, and he twists his head slowly like some wary animal, expecting to see the face

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of dreaded authority staring in at him through the little window.

"Trapped! Curse them!" he pants almost inaudibly.

"It may be Ivan Karenin." Michael speaks low, but his voice is vibrant with eagerness.

"The police would have looked in," contributes Simon, indicating the unopened shutters.

Instinctively Nikita, Simon, and Marya draw together, but Michael stands a little apart, his face flushed with eager anticipation.

Then the knock is repeated, not loudly, but with a firm insistence, and the latch is lifted as the visitor gently tries to open the barred door.

"Marya shall open," whispers Nikita; "we will go into the farther room." The room he indicates is little more than a cupboard, barely large enough to hold three men. It is the sleeping place of Simon and his wife—Michael makes his bed upon the broad oven.

"Listen!" continues Nikita in an undertone, and Michael comes a little nearer. "You, Marya, open. If it is Ivan Karenin he will give you a ring—bring it to me in there."

"It is Ivan Karenin; I know, I know——" begins Michael, but again the knock is repeated, and Nikita urges the old man into the farther room, whither Simon follows them, closing the door behind him.

Marya is almost overwhelmed at being thus left alone, but she makes an effort and calls as loudly as she can:

"Who is there? What do you want?"

"I am Ivan Karenin." The reply is firm and clear; the speaker is evidently at no pains to conceal himself.

Marya glances fearfully in the direction of the farther room. Outside she hears the sound of a man stamping his feet somewhat impatiently in the snow, for the bitter wind has laid its grip upon the ground and already the road is sheeted in white. Still trembling she advances to the outer door and takes down the bar.

It is a tall, military figure that enters, hidden in a long overcoat with a deep fur collar that nearly conceals the face of the wearer.

"Plague take it, young woman," says a clear, commanding voice, "you've kept me waiting a long time in the snow."

"It is late," falters Marya. "What have you brought?"

"Ah! The ring, eh?" The stranger removes his gloves, takes a gold ring from his finger and hands it to Marya; then, as she looks closely at it, he shuts the door and turns down the deep collar of his overcoat.

"Well," he says, "where are all the others?"

Marya raises her head to reply, but no words come to her lips. She is looking into the face of the man she had last seen, supercilious and magnificent, riding in the streets of Petersburg.

Her instinct of submission overcomes all other feelings; she blushes hot with shame at her own boldness in staring him thus straight in the face, and falls on her knees with bowed head.

"Your Highness!" she murmurs.

"Ah! You know me!" Vassili's tone is peremptory. "Where have you seen me before?"

"In Petersburg, Your Highness," whispers the awed Marya.

"And the others here? Have they seen me?"

"No, Your Highness."

"Get up, girl! Listen!" Vassili has encountered an unexpected difficulty, but he meets it with his usual resource. "Listen," he repeats to the trembling Marya, who now stands abashed before him with lowered head, nervously twisting the credential ring in her fingers. "Not a word of this to the others! If you do as I tell you, you are safe, all of you. If not," Vassili laughs as though the prospect amused him—"if not, well, there will be trouble."

"But, Your Highness, Ivan Karenin——?"

"There is no 'but,'" returns Vassili. "I am Ivan Karenin—for to-night. You will call the others. You will tell them that I am Ivan Karenin. One whisper—one suggestion that all is not as you say, and you may have more than one life to answer for. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Your Highness."

"You have a husband in there—a little son," continues Vassili. "Save them by holding your tongue. Now, call the others. Call them, I said, from there," he adds, as Marya makes a tentative movement in the direction of the farther room, and Marya calls tremulously to Nikita Antonitch.

The little door of the inner chamber fits tightly, and is innocent of any keyhole. For this reason, perhaps, it affords an effective barrier to the passage of sound, for Marya has to call three times before she is heard. Then Nikita emerges, suspicion written on

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his face, and comes slowly forward, regarding the visitor with eager scrutiny.

"Who are you?" he asks mistrustfully.

"Ivan Karenin is a name that suits me well enough just now," replies Vassili, returning Nikita's stare with a slight smile.

"You were to bring us a ring."

Vassili points to Marya, who hastily slips the ring she is still toying with from her finger and hands it to Nikita.

"Come, brother," said Vassili, when Nikita has subjected the ring to close examination, "you do well to satisfy yourself as to my identity, but we must get to business. Where are the others, Michael Petrovitch and his son Simon?"

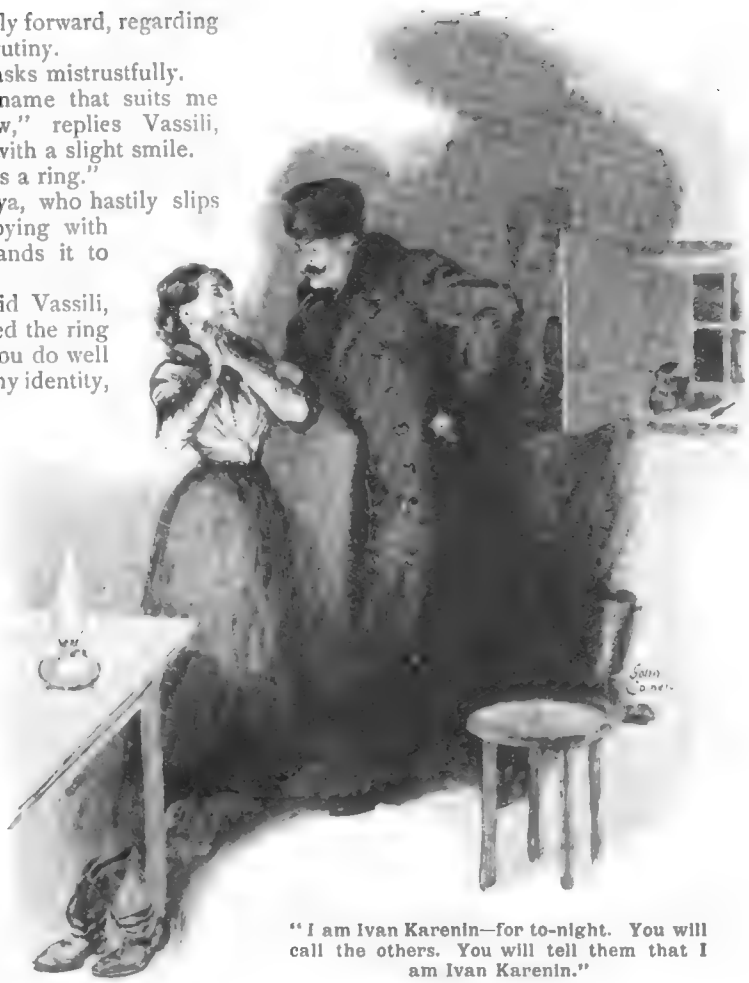
There is no need to call Michael. He has been waiting behind the half-open door for his command to greet the man he regards with an awed admiration; now, when he hears himself mentioned by name, he comes quickly forward, the light of enthusiasm glowing in his face.

"You are Michael Petrovitch!" says Vassili, laying his hands on the old man's shoulders. "To-morrow, Michael, you will be one of Russia's heroes!"

"Ah! Yes, yes, that's it," stammers Michael, too confused with joy to find words for his feeling, though he whispers eagerly to Nikita, as Vassili greets Simon: "Ah! he has the brain, he has the brain!" To which Nikita, not as yet fully satisfied, grumbles a reluctant assent.

Marya stands a little apart with anxious eyes, but trembling more by reason of her reverential regard for the person of the Prince than from uneasiness as to the safety of her own kin. She feels that she can trust this man, and it is with a sensation of reluctance rather than fear that she obeys his peremptory command to withdraw to the little bedchamber.

"Now," says Vassili when the four men are alone, "to business. There are many arrangements to be made." And the three conspirators seat themselves at the rough wooden table.



"I am Ivan Karenin—for to-night. You will call the others. You will tell them that I am Ivan Karenin."

"We heard you were taken," begins Nikita, who finds it hard to rid himself of the impression he had allowed to take so firm a hold upon him.

"I? Oh, no!" Vassili speaks with careless ease, with no thought of his own peril. "The fox that has once been taken knows how to avoid the trap."

"Did you come straight from Moscow?"

"Straight?" replies Vassili. "One forgets the meaning of the word. How did I come? Who knows? One day I am at Petersburg, another at Moscow, another day here, but no one sees me go from Petersburg to Moscow, no one knows how I come here."

"Ah, yes, yes," Michael chuckles, with

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loving admiration, and Nikita, falling under the influence of Vassili's personality, admits "We don't know everything here."

Vassili catches him up at that with a word of praise relative to the value of a knowledge of their own weakness, and Nikita, unbending, asks:

"And about to-morrow?"

"I—I have no fear for to-morrow," puts in Michael, finding his tongue at last. "No, no—not now. You will tell me, eh?" he continues addressing Vassili. "You will tell me everything I have to do, and I—I will do it."

"You trust me? Perfectly?" asks the Prince, and Michael, with hot enthusiasm, returns:

"Yes, yes, that's it. We trust you—perfectly."

Vassili pauses for a moment. He has no definite plan in his mind, and has not realised as yet what is the attitude of these three men towards his ducal self, so he asks:

"What do you know of this Prince Vassili?"

"Little enough, curse him."

"We never see him here."

"We know that he is one of our tyrants!"

The three answers are all tinged with the same bitterness, but Vassili, not seeking the cause, goes on:

"Yes, yes, well enough, but how will you pick him out to-morrow?"

"One sees the centre of a circle," replies Nikita, but Michael has what he believes to be a surer source of knowledge.

"I shall feel it," he says, getting to his feet and striking himself on the breast. "I shall feel it here. When I see him I shall hate him. Hate him for all that he has done, here, in this town. When he comes my flesh will burn with hate. I should know him among a thousand men."

"It is well I came," replies Vassili coolly. "To you, Nikita Antonitch, I say that the centre of the circle may not be the Prince you are seeking, since more often than not his effigy or double, Paul Kirschneff, represents the Prince at these functions. And to you, Michael Petrovitch, I say that you are wrong, too."

"D'ye think that I'd not know him?" says Michael.

"I'm more than sure of it. You do not hate this Prince of yours?"

"I? I do not hate the Prince?" stutters Michael. "Why——?"

"No. You do not hate him." Vassili speaks with quiet authority. "You hate the things he stands for—oppression, tyranny, misery, cruelty, and when you think of the Prince you think of these things and believe you hate the Prince. But how can you hate a man of whom you know nothing, whom you have never seen?"

Michael relapses into silence, made conscious of his own ignorance, and Nikita, who is also becoming greatly subdued, puts a question as to how they shall know the man they are seeking.

"Ah, well, it isn't difficult," says Vassili rising, and taking a few steps up and down the cottage. "I know that the Prince, though he will not be as you say the centre of the circle to-morrow, will be there among the crowd."

"But how shall we pick him out?" asks Nikita.

Vassili laughs. "Look for me!" he replies. "And when you see me, come close and do your work."

"I don't understand," mutters Michael.

"Nor I," echoes Nikita.

Vassili is considering how he shall declare himself, and there is a brief silence, broken only by the whistling of the wind that finds its way in through the crevices of the ill-contrived outer door, and shakes the flame of the rude oil lamp.

"I and the Prince," says Vassili at last, "are so alike that you could not tell us apart."

"Wonderful, wonderful," murmurs Michael.

"So like," continues Vassili, "that when you see the Prince to-morrow you will start and say: 'Is it possible? That must be Ivan Karenin!'"

"I'd never heard of this!" puts in Nikita, relapsing into something of his former suspicious attitude. "I'd thought——"

"Pity there's no one here who's ever seen the Prince," interrupts Vassili.

"Marya's seen him." Simon, who has been sitting silent all this time, finds an opportunity at last to display himself.

"Marya?" asks Vassili. "The girl who let me in? Good. Here, Marya! Marya!" Then, as Marya does not hear him, he goes over to the door of the inner room and opens it. "Marya!" he calls again, and she comes out timidly, glancing anxiously towards the three men at the table.

"Did you want—?" she begins nervously.

"Yes! Listen to me," commands Vassili. "Your husband says that you have seen Prince Vassili. Is that true?"

"Yes——"

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Vassili catches her up quickly, anticipating the words, "Your Highness," that he knows are trembling on her lips.

"Well! Tell us! Is he anything like me?"

"Like—like you?" Marya does not catch the drift of this questioning, puzzled to know whether this Royal personage has not already declared his identity.

"Yes, yes," returns Vassili, with some impatience. "Am I not like Prince Vassili in face, height, walk, general appearance?"

"Yes, yes——"

Again Vassili interrupts before she can add any form of address.

"So like that you might have mistaken me for him?"

"Oh, yes—yes!" Marya is unequal to the strain that is being put upon her, and bursts into hysterical tears.

"Good, you can go." Vassili sees that Nikita is burning to cross-question the girl, a plan that does not accord with his own scheme of things; he must make his own declaration—that is essential; so he sends Marya back to her bedchamber, and closes the door after her.

"So you see," he says, returning to the table, "when you have seen me, you will recognise the Prince."

"You seem proud of the likeness." Nikita's hatred of authority extends to the personal appearance of its representatives.

"Proud?" replies Vassili. "Oh, no! There is nothing to be proud of in being oneself. I am as I was made."

"You're not like him in other ways," growls Michael, pathetically anxious to show his admiration.

"You think not?" Vassili has returned to his desire for a fuller knowledge of their attitude towards his real self, and takes this opportunity to prick them on.

"Yet this Prince of yours has many fine qualities, I'm told."

There is a general dissentient growl from his hearers.

"He is a brave man."

"Easy for him to be brave," grunts Nikita.

"You can't find any good in him, eh?"

Michael has been waiting for some such opportunity as this. He is keen to show his master how sincere, how determined, how loyal to the cause he has espoused, may even a downtrodden workman be, and he gets to his feet and strikes the wooden table vehemently with his clenched fist.

"Good! Good in him?" he shouts. "Good in the man whose servants knouted Ivan Tcherkoff to death? Ah! you're not sure of us. We haven't seen all you've seen may be; but we've seen enough, we've seen enough. Aye! In this one small town—neighbours and relatives tortured and killed—ah! killed. Not one or two—*no*, many; a dozen, may be a score. Eh, Simon?"

They are all three fired now—even Simon, and pour out their wrongs in a hot flood of words.

Vassili sits quietly, listening to the cumulative mass of incidents, acts of cruelty, oppression, and murder that they have witnessed—to an indictment of himself as the careless, spendthrift overlord, regardless of the evil that is done in his name. Lastly, to the expression of their firm purpose to contribute their small assistance, in any possible way, towards terrorising the remorseless tyrants who have so long enslaved and oppressed the ignorant, suffering peasant.

"Ah!" says Michael, when they are quieting a little, worn out by their own vehemence, "you may trust us. We will go through with it. What do you say in your book?" and he produces the precious volume, saved from Nikita's precautionary destruction. "Ah, here! you say: 'If we would be free we must be willing each and any of us to die for the cause. We must remember that by our sacrifice we may save millions.' Ah! that's it. I'm ready to die for the cause. You wrote that—the teacher."

"Very easy for me or anyone to write." Vassili takes the book from Michael and looks at it curiously. Was this Karenin in earnest, he wonders, or was all this apparent sincerity the easily summoned emotion inspired by a literary temperament? "Aye, easy to write such things in safety," he continues aloud; "but it is a difficult thing to kill a man in cold blood—most difficult when you have him at your mercy."

"You can trust us," says Michael, as he restores his treasured book to its usual resting place. "I'd kill him anywhere, anyhow."

"Ah, but do you know—have you ever tried to kill a man?" There is a murmur of dissent from all three, and then at last a plan comes to Vassili.

"I have killed a man—in cold blood," he says, rising to his feet. "I will tell you about it. It will give you courage for to-morrow. Have you a strong cord?"

"A strong cord?" asks Nikita perplexed.

"Yes; I want you to bind my hands behind me." Then, in answer to the confused questions of the three perplexed men, he

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"Here is your opportunity; here I am, bound, and at your mercy."

replies: "Do as I tell you. You will see why."

Simon fetches a cord from the corner of the room, and he and Nikita proceed to bind the hands of Vassili tightly behind his back. "Pull hard," says the Prince. "You needn't be afraid of hurting me." And then he bids them stand back while he stands alone, bound, towering over them, a fine figure of a man, but helpless—at their mercy.

"Two days ago," he began, "a man begged audience of me. 'It was a matter concerning my safety,' he said. It is considered unsafe to admit such a man; but I had no fear of him. I ordered him to be admitted."

"I don't understand," murmurs Nikita.

"You will. Listen," continues Vassili. "This man told me of a plot to do some such work as you are doing to-morrow; but he was a coward; he had been caught before. He came to shelter himself behind me."

"Wanted you to do the work instead of him, eh?" asks Michael.

"No, not that. He wanted to shield himself. He gave me all his information"—Vassili is speaking very slowly and distinctly—"the names of the men whom he was to help, where they were to be found, everything, every particle of information. I heard all he had to say. Then I shot him as a traitor to Russia and his own cause."

Michael, Nikita, and Simon sit breathless, spellbound, their eyes riveted on the tall, imposing figure before them, waiting for the sequel to this unintelligible story. It comes with a terrifying unexpectedness.

"The name he was known by was—Ivan Karenin."

"Ivan Karenin!" Michael is on his feet, incredulous, horror-struck.

"We are betrayed!" cries Nikita, his restless dark eyes anxiously scanning the features of the Prince.

"Betrayed—by one bound man?" laughs Vassili. "Why, I am at your mercy. You could shoot me before I had time to cry out."

"Who *are* you? Speak!" It is the thought uppermost in their three minds—for the conviction that this is not the man known as Ivan Karenin has been accepted without question — it seems now that they have always known it, even Michael.

"A man of peace—generally," replies Vassili quietly, but with some earnestness. "Ivan Karenin was the first man I have ever killed. I shot him because he was a double traitor. I am the father of a boy, Simon Michaelovitch, a little Ivan, much like yours I have no doubt, and I am just as fond and proud of him as you are of your boy."

"But who are you? What is your name?" It is Michael who asks the question.

"Men call me the Grand Duke Vassili."

The three men stand awestruck, paralysed,

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with half-averted faces, unable to meet the cool, steady stare of their Prince.

"Unbutton my coat."

It is Simon who obeys the command, trembling, who reveals beneath the long, fur-lined ulster the full uniform of the Prince and the blaze of orders glittering on his breast.

"Now"—Vassili's tone is reproachful rather than taunting—"you have plotted for Heaven knows how many months to find your Grand Duke and blow him sky high. Here is your opportunity; here I am, bound, and at your mercy. There are no police outside—no one within call. You are three to one. You can do your work quietly and effectively."

The brief sentences are delivered at short intervals. Still no one moves. Instinctively the three peasants, who always wear their fur caps in the house, have removed them in deference to this great, this wonderful personage. But it is not his rank nor his position that holds them back; it is the domination of his personality—his utter fearlessness; they are overwhelmed, enslaved by the magic of his individuality.

It is Michael who breaks the spell that holds them, Michael, who with a heartbroken cry turns away and buries his head in his hands. Simon follows him, but Nikita with the quick question: "What are you going to do with us?" steps forward and loosens the Prince's bound hands.

"I thought it was rather a question of what you were going to do with me," replies Vassili; but Nikita can only reiterate mechanically:

"What are you going to do with us?"

"Do with you?" returns Vassili, with a new, hearty warmth in his voice. "Nothing, if you live like honest men. Help you if I can. I came here to teach you. Have you learnt anything? There is one thing for you to remember, Simon. Teach that boy of yours to love freedom; that is good, but teach him also to live without fear. That is better. When you, the peasants, the artisans, the workmen of Russia have learnt that lesson, there will be no need for you to kill tyrants; you will be strong enough to lead them."

This is Vassili's message, and while it still rings in their ears, Vassili has gone quietly with a friendly "Good-night."

Then Michael arises with a great sigh, and taking his once beloved book from his pocket, the book of Ivan Karenin, the traitor, he tears it passionately apart and thrusts the fragments into the stove.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WINTER.

I walked into a tailor's shop;
The tailor bowed. "Good-day!
Just now, sir, we've some quite tip-top
New goods—a fresh display.

"A pattern? Certainly! We sell
A lot of flannel . . . Brown?
You'd like a piece of that as well?
With pleasure, sir. Sit down.

"Now here's a smart and novel tweed;
I'll snip you off a bit.
This serge is now much worn; indeed,
Pray take an inch of it!

"A lounge suit you're requiring, sir?"—
I fled, betraying guilt. . . .
He knew not of my wife, and her
Unfinished patchwork quilt!

Leslie Thomas.

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AEROPLANES IN THE MAKING

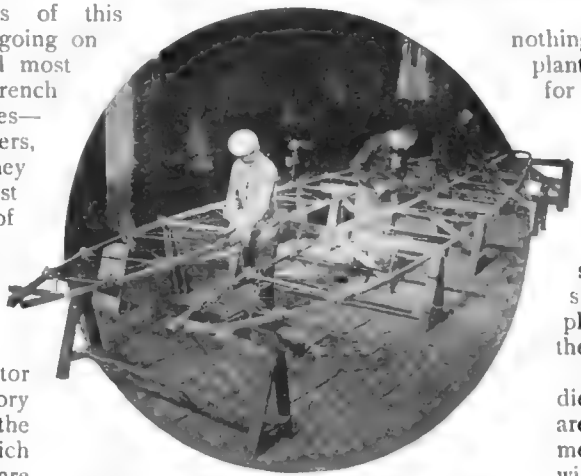
How and Where Modern Flying Apparatus is Constructed.

Illustrated with Photographs by Jacques Boyer.

A general view of the premises of Voisin Brothers, the aeroplane builders, at Billancourt.

IN France particularly a new industry has just sprung up—that of aeroplane making, and at the present moment there are several Paris firms who confine themselves exclusively to this class of work.

The illustrations of this article show work going on in the biggest and most important of the French aeroplane factories—that of Voisin Brothers, at Billancourt. They are by far the best known makers of flying apparatus, and constructed both the Farman and the Delagrange aeroplanes.



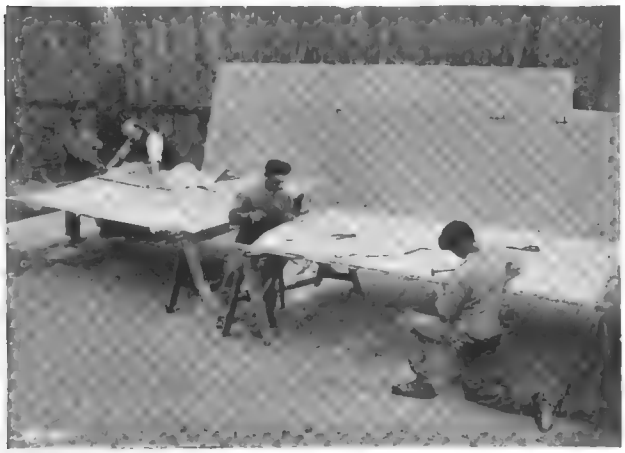
Putting together the framework of an aeroplane, which is generally made of oak, white pine, or poplar.

What strikes a visitor to an aeroplane factory most forcibly is the easiness with which these machines are constructed. There is nothing of the elaborate plant that distinguishes, for instance, a bicycle or automobile manufacturer's establishment. The only tools to be seen are a few hammers, saws, planes, and similar commonplace implements of the carpenter's calling.

In fact, the ingredients of an aeroplane are, roughly speaking, merely some wood, wire, screws or other means of joining the wood together, and the fabric with which the wings are made. The only complicated thing about the contrivance is the motor, and this absorbs more than half the total cost.

One may pay for a biplane or monoplane flying machine from one to one thousand pounds. This is how they are made:

First, four pieces about ten yards long and two or three inches square are cut from oak or white pine or poplar wood. These are planed, and then fastened together in pairs by cross-pieces in the manner shown in the second picture. The rigidity of the whole structure is carefully insured by means



Attaching the waterproofed cloth to the light framework of the aeroplane's "wings."

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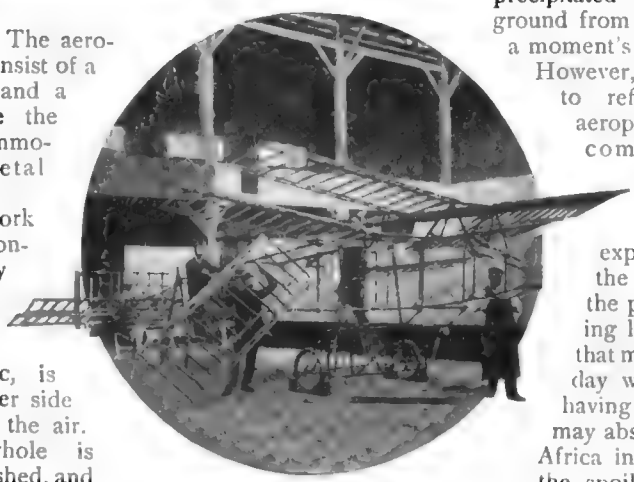
Varnishing and painting a triplane, or three-decked aeroplane.

of wire braces. The aeronaut's quarters consist of a plank to sit on and a back rest, while the motor is accommodated in a metal receptacle.

To this framework an auxiliary construction similarly made, having two horizontal surfaces of waterproof fabric, is attached on either side to support it in the air. Finally, the whole is painted and varnished, and the motor and steering gear are put in. The aeroplane is then ready for its trial trip.



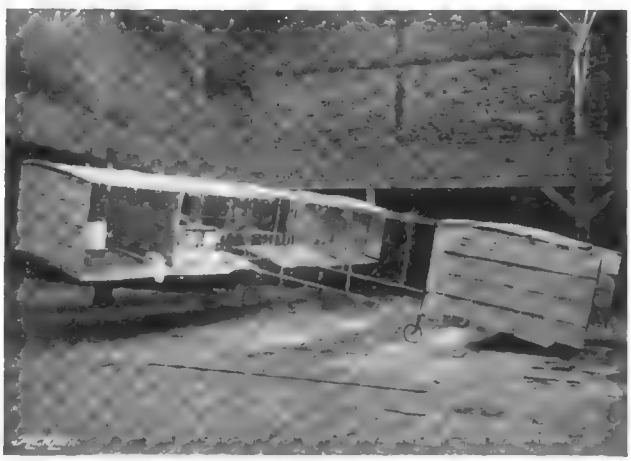
Putting together the skeleton of a monoplane.

It will be seen that an aeroplane is a much simpler and less expensive affair than a motor-car. The materials used in its construction are less costly, highly-skilled mechanics are not required to the same extent for its construction, and it takes much less time to make. In fact, the only requisite for the actual making of the latest type of flying machine is a not very advanced knowledge of carpentry.

Hitherto the greatest problem in aeroplane construction has been the provision of a suitable motor. The perfect engine for the purpose should have a maximum power combined with a minimum weight, and in this instance perfection seems harder to attain than usual.

Incidentally there is required a man who will trust himself to a fragile construction of wood and fabric, and soar up into the clouds, knowing that the petrol or other essence in his motor may set him on fire if he is unlucky, and that, if he loses his head and makes a mistake with the steering apparatus, he may be precipitated on to the hard ground from a great height at a moment's notice.

However, it is attractive to reflect that when aeroplanes have become thoroughly reliable they will provide healthy and inexpensive sport for the million. With the problem of keeping law and order in that more or less far-off day when a criminal, having robbed the bank, may abscond to Darkest Africa in his 'plane with the spoil, we will leave the contemporary police to grapple.



The finished article—a Voisin aeroplane ready for use.

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Some of His Further Adventures in England.

By Frederick Eustace.

A mongoose is about a foot long, low on the ground, and his tail is about as long as his body. He is terra-cotta in colour, and has black paws. He moves silently and with wonderful speed. "Sybil" is the sister of "The Person," who brought the mongoose from Ceylon. "Rattler" is a rough-haired terrier, and "Cluffus" a great Dane.

England,
Chilly Bones Month.

Dear Mongosling,

I expect you have been wondering why I have not answered your letter before, but the fact is one is kept so busy here during the summer looking after things generally that one has little time for writing, and besides, Sybil's mother has taken to hiding the pens just because I practise writing with them, and spoil a few nibs. I must congratulate you on obtaining the post of house-mongoose at that planter's place, and I would give you a word of advice: "Don't let your people get the upper hand of you. Remember, you are a mongoose, and insist on having your own way in everything."

Well, to begin, I must tell you I had some pretty serious troubles with my people some time back, and it was like this.

After two lots of "hot sun months" had passed, I began to get rather tired of only having Rattler and old clumsy Cluffus for companions, or rather enemies, and, as I began to know the country round a bit, I naturally took to rather long walks, until one day I fear I must admit I completely lost my way, and had a most terrible experience.

What with being chased by every man or dog I went near, the difficulty in getting food, but most of all the constant wet weather, I must have been pretty nearly dead, when at last I was found, and Sybil brought me back; I was very ill indeed, and I will say my people were very kind to me. My poor inside had most terrible cramps, and when I drank anything cold it made the cramps so bad that I used to have to run to the piece of sun they keep in the drawing-room behind the bars, and stretch myself out in the fender place. My people used to laugh and say: "There's Monnie boiling the kettle again." It may have been very funny, but I never saw very much in the joke myself.

Well, this was what caused the trouble. My people began to keep me shut up again, and you can imagine the temper that put me in, so I determined there and then that as soon as I was well again I would run away in earnest, and give them a good fright before I returned.

Accordingly, when the "short night times" came round again, I packed my inside portmanteau as full as I could, and started.

For the first week I didn't do much better than when I was lost, and I was beginning to think of returning to my people; but fortunately, one day when I was pretty near starving, and was searching in a wood for something to eat, suddenly up sprang a little animal just in front of me, and shot down a black hole between the roots of a tree.

He was just like one of our Ceylon hares, only quite small, and I *was* so astonished, as you can imagine, to see him suddenly vanish into the ground like that. However, as I could hear nothing at the mouth of the hole, I thought I might as well investigate the matter further, as I felt I should like to meet that funny little fellow, especially as I was so hungry that my poor inside had begun to growl at me.

So very cautiously I began to creep down

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the hole, and when I had gone down only about three feet whom should I come across, crouched right at the end, but my little friend "Long Ears." I can tell you I was glad to meet him, and he soon gave up living in that hole—in fact, I'm afraid he gave up living altogether—and when I had thoroughly finished an excellent and much-needed dinner, I lay down and had a most lovely sleep.

Next morning I was awakened by hearing men's voices just outside the hole, and presently one of them said:

"Get the other side of the tree, Jack, and then one of us is bound to get a shot whichever way the rabbit goes. I'll put the brown ferret in."

I guessed "rabbit" was the name of the late young "Long Ears," but you may be sure I lay pretty quiet, and wondered what a "ferret" might be, and what the men were going to do next.

Presently there was a scuffling noise of somebody running down the hole, and next minute round the corner came a brown-and-white fellow, rather like myself in build, only much more clumsy, very dirty-looking, and with a short, blunt head and a tail not to be compared with mine. I don't know which of us was the more astonished at this unexpected meeting, and we stared at one another for quite a long time, until at last he said:

"Who are you, and what are you doing here, Pink-Nose?"

I was pretty angry at being called "Pink-Nose" by such a dirty, low-bred looking fellow, but I remembered how important it is to keep cool if there is likely to be trouble coming, so I only answered:

"Mind your own business, Dirty Coat."

"Well," he replied, "I don't care who you are, you've got to bolt; that's what I'm sent in for"

"Oh," said I, "and who may be going to make me, if I may ask, Slovenly?" And I balanced myself carefully, for I saw there was a fight coming.

"I am," he cried, and ran at me with a clumsy, shuffling run.

I said a "fight," but really he was so slow that one could hardly call it so. You remember the mongoose nursery rhyme:

Catch a snake
At the back
Just below the head;
All the rest
By the throat,
Then they'll soon be dead.

What with being chased by every man or dog I went near . . . I must have been pretty nearly dead, when at last I was found.

Well I just raised myself up, and as I guessed he raised his head to meet me, and then I simply dodged under and caught him by the throat. It was really so simple, I felt half ashamed of myself for not giving him a better chance; but when you have once got that grip you can't improve on it, so I just held on, and in about five minutes Mr. Ferret gave up living any more, and I let go and had a good stretch.

Now, I thought to myself, I wonder what the men will do next. They can't get at me because of the tree, and yet they are sure to want to know what has become of Mr. Ferret and *I'm* not going to tell them.

Well, I couldn't think of anything to do, so I crept a little way up the hole to listen. For some time they were silent, and then one of

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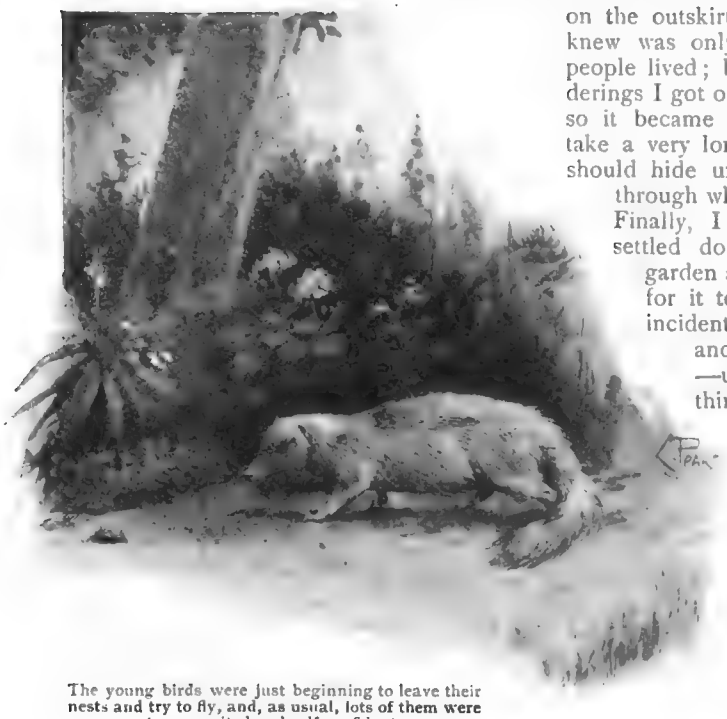

The young birds were just beginning to leave their nests and try to fly, and, as usual, lots of them were too conceited and self-confident.

them began saying things very fast about the ferret, like the "Person" did about the hammer when he hit his thumb nailing up the creeper.

Well I guessed that meant he was not pleased, so I decided to stop where I was, and would you believe it, those men stayed there all day; but of course no ferret came out, and when it began to get dark they said some more things about him, and then went away.

Well, I lived there among those Long Ears for one whole Moon-time, and grew very strong and fit; but as soon as the hot sun months had properly begun again I began to think I had given my people about enough trouble and anxiety hunting for me; and as I was also beginning to think that I should rather like a change of diet, I decided to start for home, meaning to turn up unexpectedly and give them a surprise. So having paid a last call on one of the Long Ears that I had had my eye on for some time, and being fortunate enough to find him at home, I packed my inside portmanteau well and set out.

Now, I hardly like to admit it, even to one of my own family, but nevertheless it is a fact, that I completely lost my way again, and after two days' wandering I found myself on the outskirts of a small town, which I knew was only two miles from where my people lived; but unfortunately in my wanderings I got on the wrong side of the town, so it became a question whether I should take a very long way round to avoid it, or should hide until night-time, and then go through when everyone had gone to bed. Finally, I decided on the latter, and settled down for the day in a small garden at the back of a house to wait for it to get dark. (I may mention incidentally that I was very hungry, and that these people kept fowls—useful things, fowls; I can't think why more people don't keep them.)

About an hour after dark I started to make my way through, but would you believe it, these silly people had put pieces of sun on long poles all along the road, which made it very hard to get along unseen, as quite a lot of people had not gone to bed yet.

However, I went very carefully, keeping in the dark corners, and was just congratulating myself that I had only about a hundred yards to go before I was through the beastly place, when suddenly a small boy saw me. I heard him shout: "A rat! a rat!" and then I just ran for it as hard as I could. There seemed to be an enormous number of people about, and there must have been at least a dozen after me by the time I reached a gate, and shot under it and into some shrubs in front of a house. Some of the people came in after me, but I felt pretty safe there as it was quite dark among the shrubs; in fact, I rather enjoyed the hunt. At last one of them said to the others:

"You bide here, and I'll go and get my 'li'le dawg'—'e'll soon rout him out."

As I wasn't going out in the lighted road again, I had to "bide" there too, while I wondered what sort of thing a "li'le dawg" might be; but when he came back, and I found the "li'le dawg" was a small black and white dog, very like my old friend Rattler, I fairly laughed to think of his "routing me out." I didn't even trouble to hide from him, and when he did find me I think he was never more sorry at finding anyone before. He rushed out of those shrubs howling, and the noise he made brought the man who owned

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the house to his front door, and then for some reason all the people forgot about me and ran away.

Well, I wasn't sorry to see them go, and I lay quiet a long time before I dared try the road again; but after half the night was gone I could see nobody about, so I started for home once more.

Even after I got outside the town I had to go very carefully, keeping in the hedges, as for nearly a mile farther these silly people had those bits of sun on the long posts along the sides of the road, and I didn't want to be seen again.

I took the trouble to find out about those things later on and I discovered that on the top of these posts was a kind of glass case, and that was all in the day-time, but I know they had a piece of sun shut up inside the glass case, because when it began to get dark a man used to come along with a long pole, and when he came to one of these posts he pushed the end of the pole into the glass case and gave the piece of sun a poke to rouse him up, and then he would shine like anything.

Well, I got home safely, and just walked into the house next morning as if nothing had happened. My people were so glad to see me back they couldn't do enough for me, and I had one of the best meals I ever remember.

After this I determined to stop at home for a bit, especially as the young birds were just beginning to leave their nests and try to fly, and, as usual, lots of them were too conceited and self-confident. I used to go round the grounds every morning and generally found one or two, and they always looked so miserable and undressed that when I thought of the cold nights I simply *couldn't* leave them to die alone, so I used to help them to get it over.

Sometimes as many as three of them would get it over in one day, and then Sybil's mother used to think I was off my feed when she gave me lunch, but the "Person" (you remember he's the fellow who brought me from Ceylon in a ship) would pick me up and feel my lower chest and say:

"Humph! Don't think he'll starve."

One day I must have swallowed too many feathers or something, as though, when I turned in as usual at the foot of Biddy's bed next the hot-water bottle, I was feeling quite well, yet I woke up in the middle of the night with a most frightful pain just underneath my front fur. It got so bad I determined to get up and take some exercise, so I clawed Biddy's foot gently until she woke up with a kick that nearly drove my head into my shoulders. However, I got her to let me out of the room, and then I started round the house as hard as I could go down the front stairs and up the back ones.

After about six rounds I ran away from the pain and then I went back to bed, but the exercise seems to have astonished Biddy very much, for next day I heard her telling Sybil's mother about it like this; "Is ut run he did, he did *not*, 'tis the thruth I'm telling you, he *flew*, he never touched ground once but three times and that only that he might come to turn the corners the quicker, and the shparks fair flew from his heels the way you'd say 'twas the divil after him, and he (the divil) sthriking matches on his pants as he run to see which way was Monnie gone, and could he get to come at him in the dark corners."

Next day Sybil and the Person tried to take my photograph. I know that small black box, and I don't trust it one bit, it makes such a nasty sudden click, so when they put me down on the lawn in front of the box I just split the wind as hard as I could for the house. I heard the box go click, but it missed me altogether, and when they looked at the photograph next day Sybil said I was only a streak on the plate, and I can quite believe it; but when they showed it to Biddy she said: "'Tis the living image of him when he run round the house; he was then, as now, but 'a travelling mist of mongeese.'"

Well, well, I must end up this letter if I am to catch the mail to-morrow. Give my love to all our friends and relations in Ceylon; you might do worse than come over here if you want a change. There are lots of people who want a good mongoose to look after them.

Very agilely yours,

MONNIE MONGOOSE.

P.S.—You might send me one or two cobras next mail. The snakes in this country are very uninteresting, and I don't want to lose the knack of the thing.

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Mr. George Goddard.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

No. XLIX.—RANGOON: THE STORMING OF THE GOLDEN PAGODA.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF MR. GEORGE GODDARD, LATE ROYAL NAVY.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

A petty dispute led to the second Burmese War of 1852, a conflict which included the storming and capture of the famous Golden Pagoda at Rangoon. The war lasted two years, and ended in the addition of Pegu to our Indian Empire. Two British merchant captains had been fined by a Burmese court. They complained to the British authorities, and claimed compensation. The demand was refused, and a British expedition was sent to Rangoon in November, 1851, to enforce it. Rangoon, the maritime capital of the Burmese Empire, was taken by storm on April 14th, 1852, and in the following December was added to the British Empire. One of the very few survivors of the war is Mr. George Goddard, who was at that time an ordinary seaman, serving in H.M.S. "Rattler."

To TALK about line of battle ships, powder-monkeys, screw-corvettes, and bow-chasers is to carry you back to the navy of more than fifty years ago. I am going to do that, because it is the only British Navy that I remember. As a boy I went into the *Prince Regent*, a sailing ship of the line; and afterwards I joined the *Rattler*, a screw-corvette of eleven guns, which was ordered out to the East, where they say the temple bells are ringing, and calling you back.

Well, I saw a good many temples, and they made a ringing noise, but not with bells particularly. They were guns in my time, and they flung their murderous chain-shot over the swampy rice-fields and the muddy Irrawaddy, and did their level best to smash the expedition that was sent to punish the Burmese. And the temple that made the biggest noise was the Golden Pagoda, a splendid gilded building, which glowed in the terrific heat of the pitiless Indian sun.

The *Rattler* left Woolwich for Portsmouth at the end of 1851, but did not reach Rangoon until April, 1852. The marvel is that she ever got to the East at all, for we ran into the worst gale I have ever known in English waters. We were three days getting from Woolwich to Portsmouth, and it was thought that we had foundered. Boats were smashed and spars carried away; but when we had refitted we were off again, to make Rangoon by way of Madeira, Sierra Leone, Ascension Island, St. Helena, the Cape, Singapore, and Moulmein.

The night before we reached Sierra Leone we were caught in a very heavy tornado, and many of our spars and sails were torn away. The thunder roared incessantly, and the vividness of the lightning was appalling. We put the helm up and put the ship before the wind, and on she went, dragging a mass of wreckage after her. I remember so well struggling up to the mainyard and trying to stow the canvas, which was ballooning out to such an extent that it seemed impossible to get at it. I really thought that not even the war to which we were going could be worse than this. Afterwards I should have been glad to exchange Rangoon for the tornado. We are never satisfied in this world.

At Moulmein there was an English garrison, and we took on board some troops. Lord Wolseley was in the war—the first of his many campaigns; and, for anything I know to the contrary, he may have embarked with us to go to Rangoon. But I do not remember. You see, in those days he would be an ensign, and naturally you don't expect an ordinary ensign to become

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ommander-in-Chief of the British Army. There are so many ensigns, and only one commander-in-chief.

We entered the Irrawaddy, and ascended the river till we got within sight of Rangoon. Then we anchored, and found ourselves in a river about as wide as the Thames at London Bridge. On each side of us were swampy rice-fields, with insignificant buildings shooting up from the low grounds.

Most noticeable of all the structures was the Golden Pagoda, which reminded me of nothing so much as St. Paul's at home, rising from a cluster of mean structures, and very near the river, too.

Rangoon was really a city of pagodas, terraced and fortified. Just as in London, from a high building, you can look round on almost numberless churches, with St. Paul's rising in splendid dignity above and dwarfing them, so, it seemed to me, you could look upon Rangoon, with its little temples and the biggest and most magnificent of them all, the Golden Pagoda.

It seems a hard thing to set yourselves deliberately to pound a temple with your guns, but that is what we had to do in the muddy Irrawaddy; and we had to do it because the Golden Pagoda was the most strongly fortified of all the places we had to deal with, and because the gunners who defended it set steadily to work to blow the *Rattler* out of the water. We offered a fine target; so did the Golden Pagoda. But we soon discovered that the structure was beyond the range of our guns. That was lucky for the Golden Pagoda, which in these days would be pounded to pieces in a few minutes.

The *Rattler* was light of draught, and so we had been able to steam up and take our place for the bombardment. In those days steamers were primitive concerns I have seen engines positively lift themselves out of their beds at every revolution of the crank—and it took them all their time to look after themselves. But the sailing ships were worse; they were absolutely helpless, and so it happened that we had to take the frigate *Fox* in tow. We had to leave her, however, because her draught was too deep for the Irrawaddy. The *Fox* was a forty-four gun frigate, and flew the broad pennant of Commodore Lambert, who commanded the river expedition. I believe we cast the frigate off before we began the bombardment of the stockades which had been made to defend Rangoon—stockades of mud and cane and stone—a sort of strong fence to keep an enemy at bay. The stockades were loopholed, and from the embrasures peeped the muzzles of guns and muskets. I do not think that any gun they had was bigger than a 12-pounder, and those were the days, remember, of muzzle-loaders.

It was Easter Sunday, just before noon, when the Burmese opened fire upon us from their stockades. Then the fight began which meant an incessant pounding until sunset.

It was a steady, simple sort of battle; gun against gun; steam-corvette against joss-house.

Marvellous indeed is the change that has taken place in war. Nowadays you shut yourself up in walls of steel and pound away with weapons that are terrible to look upon and think about. When a ship goes into action not a living soul is seen; but guns, officers, and crew were just as visible on board the *Rattler* as a motor-'bus is in the Strand.

The captain and the first lieutenant were on the bridge; other officers, such as mates and midshipmen, were on deck; and the crew were on deck, too, for the most part, because the guns were on the upper, or spar deck, and the heaviest of them all was the 68-pounder in the bow—a pivot gun. We had five broadside guns and the pivot gun, in all eleven. The broadside guns, which were 32-pounders, were exactly the same sort of weapon as was used at Trafalgar.

We might, indeed, have been Nelson's sailors come to life again—many of them were still alive—for we had our powder-monkeys in the *Rattler* just as the *Victory* had. These little fellows ran between the guns and the magazine hatchway and brought the powder in their cartridge-boxes. They looked on the business as a glorious game, and revelled in the fighting. I sometimes think that the youngsters of to-day are not made of the same stern, dare-devil stuff as the lads who were helping to pound the joss-houses. There are no powder-monkeys nowadays; hydraulic lifts and electric devices do their work. I should be utterly lost on board one of our modern battleships.

I was the assistant loader of one of the broadside guns and wore what we call a jumper—that is, a sort of white jacket, with white trousers and a white hat. It was the lightest clothing you could have, even for the tropics; yet it was too much, and many a man stripped to the waist long before the bombardment ended.

It was insufferably hot, but we pounded away,

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fascinated by the sight of the mischief that we did. Our weapons were not formidable, but they were heavy compared with the Burmese guns, and we saw stockade after stockade destroyed, and exploded powder magazine after powder magazine.

On the bridge the captain watched Rangoon and the havoc of our shots. He gave his orders by word of mouth to the first lieutenant, who shouted them to the junior officers on deck, and they in turn controlled the captains of the guns. All was absolutely fair and above board; now, in our warships, the captain gets into the conning-tower, and with the help of his tubes and electric wires directs his ship just as the brain guides the human body.

One by one we shattered the stockades. Sometimes our broadsides blazed; then there was the deeper boom of the pivot gun and the roaring of the shot across the swampy rice-fields, mostly towards the Golden Pagoda. That was the chief target, because it was from the Golden Pagoda that the biggest shots came towards us. It was there that the Burmese had their heaviest guns, although those weapons, as I have pointed out, were not nearly so effective as our own.

Our shots went home with pitiless precision, but the Burmese cannonade was harmless. We had no casualties from the guns themselves—those came later, in the storming—but we suffered many from the terrible sun. We had no small-arm fire, but our muskets, loaded, were ready for instant use, and we had our cutlasses buckled on, in the good old Trafalgar fashion, as we served the guns. We got very thirsty, of course, and helped ourselves to drinks from buckets of water which were placed about the deck.

The bombardment went on until nearly sunset; then Rangoon seemed to be burning, and it looked as if the Burmese had had enough of the *Rattler*. The bugle sounded the cease fire, and boats were manned and armed, and I went away in one of the cutters to disperse some of the enemy who had gathered on the bank of the river, rather too near us to be agreeable. They had had enough of us, however, and bolted into the jungle; and I, at any rate, had had enough of them for the time being, and was glad to see them go

Next day two of the East India ships came up, the *Formosa* and the *Pluto*, with troops on board and guns and ammunition. The guns were landed on the Monday and Tuesday by the simple method of throwing them overboard into the mud. We had to get them out and clean them, so as to be ready for the storming of the Golden Pagoda. There were no artillerymen; all that particular work was done by the sailors.

With the Royal and East India troops leading the way, and the detachment from the Navy bringing up the rear with the guns, drawn by bullocks, we began the storming. I fancied that, as we had escaped in the ship, we should be lucky enough on shore to get clear of the shot; but it was a very different business indeed this time.

On the Easter Sunday the Burmese had only a ship to go at, and not a very big one, with weak artillery; now they could fire point-blank at masses of marching men, with chain shot—that is, shot chained together, and canister and grape shot, which means that the guns were loaded with bullets and pieces of metal which, when fired, scattered and did terrible mischief.

The Golden Pagoda is very much like one of the pyramids, crowned by a structure which looks like an enormous lighthouse, a gilt spire which you can see from every part of the surrounding country. All round the pagoda are smaller shrines, or temples, and in the fifties the building was moated and defended by batteries.

Standing on a small hill, which is the only high ground in the district, the pagoda was an unpromising fort to attack; but the stormers marched across the exposed land, under a burning sun, towards the moat and the drawbridges.

We sailors had the work of seeing to the guns, and a tough job it proved to be, for when the chain shot and the rest of the scrap-iron began to fly amongst us and cut us up, some of the bullocks fell, badly mangled. The other bullocks, maddened by the smell of blood and the awful noise which the whizzing iron made, either tried to bolt or, which was just as bad, refused to budge.

There we were stuck, open to the full fury of the fire from the pagoda, unable to get the guns nearer because of the stubborn animals. All the same, we served the guns and smashed away at the enormous golden building. It was needful to get nearer, and we beat and pulled and cajoled; but the bullocks would not move; then our commanding officer, the first lieutenant, shouted to us to clear the animals out and drag the guns ourselves; and with plenty of cheering we obeyed and took the ropes and hauled the guns to a more suitable place.

The lieutenant was a magnificent specimen of the old fighting naval officer, the man

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Boats were manned and armed, and I went away in one of the cutters.

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whose trade was battle, and who did not know the meaning of fear. He saw what was happening; he noticed that some of us—myself amongst them—were ducking and bobbing our heads rather faster, I think, than the flying shot. You couldn't help it; for when you heard that murderous whizz you ducked instinctively. Shame didn't count. The lieutenant was standing on a bit of rising ground, with the scrap-iron whistling and whizzing about him, with his sword drawn, and, believe me, never moving a muscle. He scorned to do it.

"It's no use bobbing and ducking," he shouted at last. "You aren't going to save your skins that way. Hold up to it, men, and face it! And plug in with the guns as hard as you can. The faster you fire, the sooner you'll be through with it."

So we did as we were ordered to do, and having dragged the guns up we pounded away at the Golden Pagoda and, to do them justice, the Burmese blazed away at us.

Ambulances began to come down from the pagoda and past us; but the most singular thing about them was that they contained men who had not been wounded, but had been struck down remorselessly by the sun, the heat of which was perfectly dreadful. More men died of the heat and disease during the war than were accounted for by either gun or musket or robber.

Being in the rear of the stormers I did not quite see all that was passing in front, where the soldiers were, but I saw them going ahead, and I saw them rush the moat and the drawbridges, and I saw the Burmese bolting across the rice-fields and the cornfields, leaving their guns and their Golden Pagoda behind them, and thinking only of one thing, and that was the best way of saving their skins.

At last, I scarcely knew how, I found that I was on the steps of the famous temple, and I sank down exhausted by the heat and the desperate fighting. The dead and dying Burmese, who were around on every hand, in the moat, and on the level ground, showed how fierce the combat had been, and the passing ambulances and the red-clothed figures on the earth told the sorry tale of British loss. Yet even then I could not help noticing the magnificence of the great place, which is said to be the most splendid of all the Burmese temples.

All sorts of dragons and weird idols were around me, and there was a horror hidden in every dark place about the uneven stairs. I believe that even in these days, when British tourists go in perfect safety to the temple which I helped to take, they are awed into silence when they begin to make their way up the dark, uncanny by-ways to the building to look at it, or, like the Burmese, clap a patch of gold leaf on to add to its splendour, and at the same time, I fancy, to rid them of some of their sins.

There had been a lot of talk of loot. Wonderful stories had been told of the riches of the Golden Pagoda, of jewels in abundance, and of precious metals, which were to be had for the picking up. I believe that a good deal of treasure fell to the lot of some of the stormers, but I myself did not come across it; I certainly did not get a share of the riches. They went mostly to the troops; the sailormen were out of it, because they were in the rear. Besides, they were not quite so well up to the game as the soldiers of those days. I am talking now of the times when the old East India Company was in existence, and when soldiers in the East could make fortunes out of loot, and ships' captains make fortunes, too, out of two or three voyages.

On that famous night I slept on the steps of the Golden Pagoda. The night before I had camped out under the stars. I was none the worse for the fight. A spent ball had struck me in the stomach, but had not done lasting mischief. The Burmese kept up a ragged firing as they retired, which they had done very unwillingly, because the temple was a very sacred place and treasure house, and they did not want it to get into the hands of infidels, as I suppose they called us.

When morning came I went back to the ship, without seeing the inside of the pagoda; but I was not very sorry on that account, because the heat was insufferable, and the mosquitoes were worse than the heat. They literally swarmed. It was no use killing them, for millions rose up to take the places of the slain. On board ship it was impossible to sleep for them, and my legs were swollen with their bites, to say nothing of my hands and face. I remember going below and passing my hand along one of the beams. It was wet and warm with the blood from the mosquitoes, which, after their feast, had got as far as the beam. You could sweep thousands of them away in a second.

No, there was no East calling me, once I had got away from it, and I don't think poets would answer the call so readily, or listen so much to the temple bells if they had had the experience of Rangoon that came my own way in the early fifties. I daresay things are better in these days; but I suppose that

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The men . . . fell to work with the steel and boarded their junk in the good old reckless fashion.

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the Golden Pagoda rises up now, as it did then, from the melancholy rice-fields and the dismal mud banks of the river, with their untold millions of shrimps.

We buried our dead and left the fallen Burmese to be looked after by their own people. Then we had to set to work to clear the country of the Burmese who had taken to dacoiting or robbing; and hot work it was, too, especially as the dacoits loved nothing so much as fooling us and then escaping.

We would track them so closely that we fell upon their very living-places; but as for the Burmese themselves I seldom saw them. Often enough, however, I was in time, with my comrades, for the dinner that the dacoits had made ready for themselves. Great pans of rice would be seen on the fire cooking, and the chickens would be plucked ready for roasting. We finished the cooking and the roasting, and after that, with very contented minds, finished the dinner, too. So you see, it wasn't all chasing in vain.

I was thankful enough to leave the land of swampy rice-fields and pagodas and blood-thirsty mosquitoes and go farther East, this time to the China Seas after pirates, who swarmed in their junks and lurchers, which were bigger and faster craft than junks.

The pirates were cruel and pitiless. When we caught them in the beginning we handed them over to the Chinese authorities, who put them to death without mercy. I used to see the poor wretches crucified against walls, or with their eyes gouged out or their limbs mutilated. The authorities were even more merciless than the freebooters.

At last we got orders that the pirates were to be destroyed without mercy, ships and all, and that they were not to be captured. There were two reasons for this—first and foremost, humanity, because it was too terrible to hand them over to their own judges; and, secondly, because they were a constant menace to the peace and safety of the China Seas.

One day a naval officer and his boat's crew had made a valiant attack on some pirates. The men only carried ten rounds of ammunition, and these were soon exhausted; then they fell to work with the steel and boarded their junk in the good old reckless fashion, slashing at and sweeping away the pirates with the cutlass.

Those of the Chinese who escaped from he boarders ran below, and the lieutenant nd his men followed them.

Instantly another junk, whose sweeps were got out, rowed stealthily down towards the captured vessel, and the pirates swarmed on board. Hearing the noise, the officer and his men hurried back to the deck.

They were met with overwhelming numbers, and the lieutenant and three men were killed on the spot, cut to pieces with spears, while the rest were hacked and left for dead. Some villagers found the poor wounded fellows, and brought them and the news of the disaster to us.

Being a steamer, we were soon on the track of junks and lurchers, and, the guns having done their work, we got the boats out, and boarded what were left after the fire and shot had done their duty. One day I and a comrade, cutlass in hand, had rushed below, after accounting for all the pirates, so far as we knew.

We were prodding about, trying to turn hidden Chinamen out of dark holes and corners, when we both started and, perhaps, turned rather pale. I, at any rate, felt uneasy enough, for on the deck we heard a most terrible and uncanny noise.

"I thought they were all done for!" exclaimed my comrade. "She only carried a dozen men, and I fancied we'd settled 'em"

"There's more on deck," I answered.

In a brace of shakes we had rushed on deck.

We saw no Chinamen, but there, just by us, was the most enormous chest I ever set eyes on—a huge box about three feet deep, the same width, and something like ten feet long.

Chinamen are the most cunning creatures on two legs, and instantly I thought that we had a box chock full of the yellow devils, waiting for a chance to spring out at us.

For one awful moment we stared at the thing; then I whispered:

"Have you your musket ready?"

"Yes," he answered, and there was dew on his forehead which was not caused by the eastern sun.

"Then," I said, "I'll lift the lid up swiftly, and as soon as I do it shoot the first yellow man that jumps out. Then we'll slash in with the cutlass."

He presented his musket, and I jerked the lid up.

I fell back, and the lid fell back too, for the most affrighting yells and squeals greeted our ears.

The chest was full, not of Chinamen, but of pigs.

We carried out our orders, to fire and sink the lurcher, and I fear that a lot of fine roasted pork was wasted, because we had no time to shoot the tenants of the chest.

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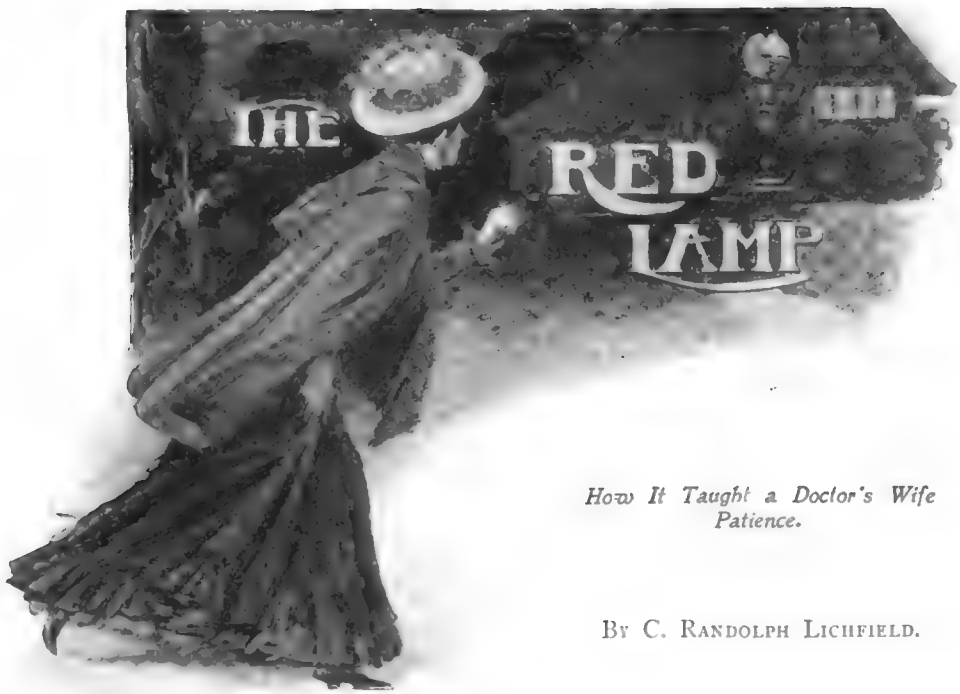

How It Taught a Doctor's Wife Patience.

By C. Randolph Lichfield.

Barnaby was struggling into his oilskins when Dora rustled out into the hall from the drawing-room. The maid, coming downstairs, caught her eye before she saw Barnaby, and she inquired for him sharply, but at the same moment heard him, and looked in his direction.

"Barny—where are you going?" she demanded in a tone of surprise that was not altogether genuine.

"I've got to go out, Dora," he replied lightly. "Wretched nuisance—pouring with rain! But there it is!"

Dora glanced over her shoulder, that gleamed whitely through the net of her dinner-dress, to see if the maid were out of earshot; then she approached the doctor, and gravely began to unbutton his oilskins.

"You are not going out to-night, Barny," she said determinedly.

He seized her hands gently, and, drawing back, held her away from him, laughing softly at her.

"Duty's call, Dora," he returned.

"Duty!" she exclaimed, the word leaping from her lips as a flush of indignation mounted to her face. "Oh! this constant call of duty—I'm sick of it!"

"Dearest," he protested banteringly.

She snatched her hands away, and clasped them fiercely together.

"I tell you I'm sick of it, Barnaby Ridgeworth," she panted. "Do you owe me no duty? D'you owe no duty to your guests? Am I always to be thrust aside when strangers call for you?—I, to whom you owe your first duty, which you've taken a holy vow to respect?"

"Illness," he began, with a blank look of embarrassment, "illness——"

"'In sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,'" she interrupted. "Is it in your love for me—is it cherishing me that you neglect me for strangers—utter strangers, who interest you as a professional man—that my pleasure counts to you for nothing? At all hours, in all circumstances, you put me and my wishes aside as if we did not exist."

Suddenly her tone and manner changed. "Don't go this time, Barnaby," she pleaded. "Prove to me for once that my pleasure is paramount."

"My dear girl—I—I can't," he stammered, and, reaching behind her, took down his cap. "It is not an extra special occasion, and the call is urgent."

"It *is* an extra special occasion, for I ask you to prove your love for me, Barny," she retorted. "Again and again and again this has happened. Have you ever once refused a call to please me, to be with me, to take me anywhere? Never! You have no more

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hesitated to leave me than to leave the servants!"

"My dear girl," he said again, frowning and pulling on his gauntlets, "you're talking nonsense. You knew I was a doctor; you knew the life a doctor leads. You never were one to put pleasure before duty."

"This once, Barnaby—just this once," she pleaded in a harsh tone.

He stepped to the door, and, flinging it open, pointed dramatically to the red lamp on one of the gate posts at the end of the short walk.

"D'you see that, Dora?" he inquired in an earnest tone, and, drawing back to her, snatched one of her hands. "You see it, but do you realise its significance? It is a coastlight to the physically wrecked, to those who are perishing in a sea of suffering. And shall I stay and eat a comfortable dinner, enjoying your company and our friends', when I know that the signal of distress has been made—the urgent call for succour? What would you think of the coastguards and the lifeboatmen if *they* did so—stayed by their firesides and loved ones when duty—the duty of succouring those who perish—called to them?"

She shook off his hand, and hurrying on to the doorstep, pointed through the pelting rain to another red lamp which shone dimly in the distance.

"D'you see that?" she demanded.

"But that is not my lamp," he told her, and gently drew her back out of the rain.

"And I am nothing!" she said bitterly, turning away.

"You are a doctor's wife, my dearest," he replied.

"A wife?" she said, turning round on him scornfully. "A housekeeper, perhaps, but not a wife!"

"Dora, Dora!" he exclaimed passionately, "you are unreasonable. Everyone has his duty. You have yours, and you would be the last to deny or neglect it."

"My duty is to you, sir," she retorted, dropping him a mocking curtsey. "Your duty is to anybody and everybody—but me."

She hurried back into the drawing-room, leaving him standing dejectedly looking after her. A wave of light chatter swept out upon him, and he caught a glimpse of the bright room as she opened the door. She cut off both by shutting the door quickly.

Barnaby sighed, and glanced along the hall out into the wet, dark street. The rain fell with the hissing sound of steam, and gave an extra touch of chilliness to the air. A horrible night, he thought, and stroked his moustache nervously. He had had nothing to eat since luncheon, and had been feeling considerably below par all day.

He caught the glow of the red lamp, and his head went up. He cleared his throat noisily, and squared his shoulders as he strode out on to the rain-splashed doorstep.

The throb of his car coming round from the garage at the side of the house made him throw out his arm to pull the door to. But he checked himself in the act, and stepped back into the hall.

"Half-a-minute, Wilson," he shouted to the chauffeur, as the gleaming car pulled up.

With long strides he went to the drawing-room and entered.

"I've got to go out, good people," he announced lightly, with a comprehensive glance at his guests. "It's a tremendous bother, and I'm so sorry. Dora—can I speak to you a moment?" He drew back into the hall.

Her eyes glittered with wonder as she rose, and, excusing herself, rustled out to him.

"Kiss me," he said, in a low tone, smiling gravely as she pulled the door to.

"Well—what?" she inquired.

"Kiss me," he repeated, and laid a light hand on her almost bare shoulder.

"Is—that all?" she said, with stiff lips.

"That is all."

In an instant she was gone, and before he realised it he was staring at the closed door. Slowly he put out his hand and touched the knob, then turned away, and, squaring his shoulders, ran out to the waiting car.

"Get out, Wilson. Shan't take you. Beastly night. I've got to go out to Shepley Cross. Everything all right?"

"Yes-sir," answered the chauffeur, eagerly stepping out of the car.

"All right," said Barnaby.

He got in quickly and, pulling the rug across his knees, set the car rolling towards the open country.

It was a dark night, a remarkably dark night, and Dora had refused to kiss him.

The heavy raindrops, flashing in the light of the powerful head-lamps, threw a sort of white curtain before him, and beat into his face stingingly; and the patient he was going out to see could not live the year out.

He was soon out on the country road, heading along between the dark hedges, into which he seemed to drive like a wedge,

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thrusting them on either side of him. The splashing of the muddy water the wheels picked up and threw off, sounding like the splitting of sheets, drowned the hum of the car.

He rushed on past a lighted cottage, through an avenue of tall trees, which strangely resembled columns of coiling smoke; down a declivity, then round a corner, at which the wind drove the cold rain into his ear until it flowed over and trickled down between his collar and his neck. As he ran his car up a winding incline, he got a sudden touch of vertigo, the second that day. But it was only slight, and he recovered himself in time to steer off the grass margin of the road before it was too late. And in another minute or two he pulled the car up at a wooden fence behind which stood a long, low cottage, marked to him by two lighted windows.

He alighted unsteadily, stepping into a splashing pool of water; pushed back the little gate, and went up the narrow path slowly, pulling off his gauntlets. Once he swayed slightly, and stepped upon the cabbage patch, sinking up to his ankle in the light, wet earth. Then suddenly the door before him was flung open, and a little elderly woman peered out at him beneath the shading of a withered hand.

"Thank the Lord," she mumbled toothlessly, and drew back into the lighted kitchen.

"Here I am, Mrs. Mulliday," he cried to her loudly, for she was very deaf.

"Thank Heaven," she mumbled toothlessly, and drew back into the lighted kitchen. "'E was took awful bad 'bout six." She shut the door quickly as he entered, and plucking at her skirts began to lead the way up the steep, narrow staircase. "I thought it was you, doctor," she added, with a note of gladness in her voice. "'E's be'n wantin' you to come."

Barnaby stood at the bottom of the stairs and shed his oilskins without speaking; it was so difficult to make Mrs. Mulliday hear. Then he went up, three stairs at a stride, and entered a low-pitched, candle-lit bedroom, where, on a double-bed, facing the little window, a haggard, yellow-skinned old man lay writhing and groaning weakly.

"Well, old chap," said Barnaby, and, sitting on the edge of the bed, took one of the wasted hands in his, "this is wretched for you, isn't it? But never mind, we know what to do, don't we?"

The hand he was holding closed on his gratefully, but the old man did not speak.

"Third bad turn 'e's 'ad this week," mumbled the patient's wife, as Barnaby took a case from his pocket and produced a hypodermic syringe.

"Now," he said, "just a little pin-prick, and you'll soon be better—soon be better. There!"

He rose, and old Mulliday's face relaxed

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its suffering expression in anticipation of relief to come.

"I'm very glad you sent for me," said Barnaby, crossing to the washing-stand and dipping his syringe into a ewer of water. "I'll send you something to-morrow to help you resist these attacks."

The old man smiled at him silently as Barnaby said good-night cheerfully and went downstairs.

Mrs. Mulliday tottered into the lamp-lit kitchen, while Barnaby was getting into his oilskins within the threshold of the parlour, and, rummaging in an old workbox, she produced a small tobacco-tin in which she kept her money. Selecting the brightest of three half-crowns, she hurried back to him and pressed the coin upon him.

"There you are, an' God bless you for comin'," she mumbled.

"Thank you," he said, and pocketed his fee. "You must not hesitate to send for me if he has another of these attacks. And——"

"Eh?"

He bent, and held his lips close to her big, flat ear.

"Send for me whenever he has an attack like this," he said, speaking slowly and very distinctly. "The pain is cruel."

"Long way to come," she returned, looking up into his face dully. "Job to get anybody."

"But in a case of such suffering, any of those boys across the field——"

"Eh?"

"Send one of the boys—*you* know!—over there, across the field."

"Wouldn't come. Young folks don't know what sufferin' is."

"But they know what money is. Give——"

"Eh? I am so deaf."

"Give them a shilling out of the half-crown you always give me."

"Oh, I see. Well, p'raps they might."

"I think so, I think so. Good-night."

"Good-night, an' God bless you for comin', doctor."

She watched him go down the narrow path and get into his car, but a gust of wind beating the heavy rain into her face made her draw back and shut the door before he had started on his way home.

* * * * *

The night bell rang furiously, and Dora stirred in her sleep, without waking, but its repeated ringing awoke her, and she roused herself, rising on an elbow.

"There it is again!" she whispered harshly. "Duty, duty!" She listened a moment, for the bell was silent now. "Barnaby, do you hear the trumpet's call?" she inquired, and dropped impatiently on her pillow. But her cheek had scarcely touched the still warm linen when she sat up quickly. For there was no answer, no movement, no sound; and she recollected that Barnaby had not returned when she had retired for the night.

Leaning across her husband's side of the bed, she switched on the light of the little electric clock which stood upon the table there.

"Two!" she cried in amazement. Could Barnaby have come back and been called out again without disturbing her, she wondered. A glance over the bed satisfied her that he had not lain down to rest that night.

"Poor fellow," she murmured sympathetically.

The bell rang loudly again, and she got out of bed and approached the speaking-tube communicating with the street door.

"Since a little after eight! Two o'clock. Six—six hours? Impossible!"

Fear had seized her suddenly with a grip that evolved a hundred horrible thoughts in her mind and gave her heart a chilly ache.

Snatching the plug from the speaking-tube she laid her lips to it.

"Hullo!" she cried. . . . . "Good Heavens!" she gasped, staggering back and clapping her hands to her cheeks. "Good Heavens! Oh!—oh!"

She dashed to the window, and tearing aside the blind, flung it behind her shoulders. Fumblingly she pulled the latch and heaved the window up.

"Hi!" she cried frantically, leaning out. "Hi! You man, there! Fool! fool! Can't you hear me?"

The messenger stepped back down the path, looking up at her.

"Look!" she exclaimed, pointing. "You see that red lamp! Go quickly!—tell Dr. Graysdon that Doctor Ridgeworth has met with a terrible accident, and he must—must come at once with you. Quick—quick!"

The man ran out of the gate, then stopped and looked back.

"Don't see no red lamp anywheres," he declared.

"It's out, but it's there, it's there!" she screamed to him. "Look for the brass plate on the gate, then. Quick!"

She turned back into the room, and gasping with sobs, like one who is nearly drowned,

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she struggled into her clothes. As she threw her skirt over her head she hurried to the bedroom door, and, pausing a moment there while she hooked it, ran out on to the landing, calling to the servants, and stamping passionately because her cries were unheeded for what seemed to her an unconscionable time.

"Alice," she panted, when at length a sleepy voice answered her from the top landing, "your master has met with a dreadful accident! You must get up, all of you! Have the best spare room ready, in case we are able to bring him home. Have everything ready—fire, hot water—everything! Use your brains!" And she hurried back into the bedroom, shivering at the thought that Barnaby might be dead.

In another minute she had snatched a hooded cloak from the wardrobe and started downstairs.

As she opened the front door—left on the latch for Barnaby—the messenger came running back.

"I can't get nobody to answer," he said breathlessly. "I've rung an' rung, an' knocked my hardest."

"Wretch!" she cried, pushing past him and starting swiftly down the road, with him following closely. "You shouldn't have come away till you had awakened him."

Flinging back the wide gate which bore the plate of Doctor Graysdon, she ran up the carriage-sweep before the house.

"Ring again!" she panted, glancing up at the dark window. "Knock, knock, knock!"

She waited there trembling in every limb, watching for a glimpse of light in any visible window.

She struggled to her feet and drew close, stooping and snatching one of Barnaby's hands.

"Knock!—keep on knocking! And ring!" she cried.

She took a step aside to get a fuller view of the window of the room in which she supposed the doctor slept, and stumbled over a loose stone. Instantly she snatched up the stone and flung it at the window.

There was a loud noise of breaking glass, the muffled scream of a woman, and sounds of other commotion within the room.

"Ring again!—knock!" she cried, stamping her foot impatiently.

But at that moment a window was flung up, and a man's thick voice bawled angrily to her.

"What the blazes——?"

"Doctor! Doctor!" she exclaimed, throwing out her arms towards him. "My husband—Doctor Ridgeworth—has met with a terrible accident! Come—come quickly! He is lying at the side of the road near the turnpike. Oh——"

"That Mrs. Ridgeworth?—is it?"

"Yes! Be quick!"

"I'll be with you in a minute!" he shouted as he drew back.

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"Thank Heaven, thank Heaven, thank Heaven," she murmured rapidly, and hastened down the carriage-sweep out into the sodden road. There she paused a moment, looking either way in turn distractedly. Then, with a low exclamation, she ran back, meeting the messenger half-way up the sweep.

"He keeps his motor in the stable there," she exclaimed. "Perhaps we can get it out and save time. Come along."

The stable was locked, however, and she seized the latch with both her hands shaking the doors with all her strength.

"No good," murmured the messenger, with unconscious humour. "Stable doors ain't made to open like that; bolted, you may be sure."

"They ought to be made to open instantly in a case of life and death," she retorted fiercely, and shook the doors again and again.

"All right, Mrs. Ridgeworth, all right; we'll have her out in no time."

She turned, startled, and a shadowy form brushed her aside, and rubbed a key blindly into the lock of the doors.

A light shot up, and Dora saw Doctor Graysdon face to face as he stood in the lighted stable. He threw a swift look at her, then at the messenger beside her.

"Get down, you, fellow, whoever you are, and hook the gate back, will you?" he demanded sharply, looking at the messenger. "I'll pick you up as we come down. Look alive! we're all but ready. Get in, Mrs. Ridgeworth."

Dora scrambled into the car, and with an evident effort he climbed in beside her. As he did so he uttered a deep groan.

Dora heard it and looked at him sharply, wonderingly.

"Beg pardon," he said, and sent the car slowly down the sweep. He pulled up at the gate for the waiting messenger to embark, then they started. "Rheumatic gout, Mrs. Ridgeworth. Been laid up these five days. Scarcely slept a wink until to-night. And how did it happen?"

"Looks as if he'd taken the wrong turning, an' making to right himself run the car up the bank, sideways like," answered the man, rising from the seat behind the doctor and shouting in his ear. "Turned over. A market gardener's carter, coming in from Hipley, found him—pinned underneath. We got the car off him, but thought it better not to shift him till he'd been attended to."

"And you came in by the market-cart, no doubt?" Graysdon snorted over his shoulder.

"Yessir."

"Three miles an hour? I guessed it! Left him lying there, and crawled into town for a doctor—on a load of cabbages! Surprising you didn't lose your identity among all that green-stuff!"

"Didn't know what else to do," muttered the man sulkily, and fell back on his seat.

"What d'you think you were given legs for—to ride on cabbages, or to run when there was need to run?" demanded Graysdon savagely. "Cheer up, Mrs. Ridgeworth," he said aside to Dora. "We're nearly there."

So nearly, indeed, that within a few minutes, as he turned the corner, he had to jam on both brakes with all his strength to avoid running into a couple of men.

"Stop!" shouted one.

Dora rose in the seat as she saw Barnaby's car standing at the side of the road.

"Where is he? Where is he?" she cried, jumping out.

He was lying on the side of the road, with the waterproof rug beneath him, and a shabby overcoat thrown over him. A lantern had been set beside him.

"Oh, he's dead!" cried Dora, and dropped on her knees from sheer weakness, a pace away from him.

"No," said Graysdon abruptly. "Nothing of the sort."

She struggled to her feet, and drew close, stooping and snatching one of Barnaby's hands.

"Steady there, please; that arm may be injured," Graysdon exclaimed. "Stand away a minute, and let me find out what's wrong."

She drew back weakly, and sat down on the step of the car, breathing in sobs, but watching Graysdon's every movement. When he straightened himself, she started up.

"Will he live?—will he die?" she panted.

"Die?" he ejaculated impatiently. "Not at present. I've saved ten times deader men than he is, and I'll save him."

"Oh, God bless you, God bless—oh, dear Doctor Graysdon, God bless you!" she sobbed, and seizing him by the arm, patted him frantically upon the shoulder.

"We must get him home," he said, and turned to the three men, giving them instructions how Barnaby was to be raised in the waterproof cloth and laid on the floor of his car.

And thus Barnaby was taken home.

It was a little before noon the following day when he opened his eyes and became sensible of his surroundings.

The room was so darkened that Dora, who was sitting stiffly in a chair by his side, did not see the change, even though she

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was watching his face. Nor did he see her for some time, for his eyes opened on the ceiling, and remained fixed there while he considered past events, and arranged them in their proper sequence in order to understand his position. Then a slight forward movement of her brought her head and shoulders in a line with the window, and out of the tail of his eye he saw her silhouetted against the holland blind.

"Kiss me," he whispered. And when she had started up noiselessly and lingeringly kissed him, he fell asleep.

Later in the day Doctor Graysdon paid his second visit, bringing with him a nurse, who he insisted was to take Dora's place.

"One patient in a house is quite enough, Mrs. Ridgeworth," he said, when she protested. "You go to bed and sleep for forty-eight hours. The man's out of danger."

And Dora, worn out by anxiety and anguish, consented on reflecting that she had kissed Barnaby whilst he was conscious. She went to bed, and after a few hours' restlessness, fell asleep.

She awoke with a strong feeling of misgiving, and, throwing a dressing-gown around her, hurried into Barnaby's room.

She stood in the open door horrified to a standstill. Barnaby was talking incoherently in a dull tone, while the nurse lay on the sofa at the other end of the room, apparently indifferent.

"Nurse," panted Dora, "why didn't you come and tell me he's delirious?"

"It's of no consequence, Mrs. Ridgeworth," replied the nurse in a whisper, "Doctor Graysdon told me to expect it."

"No consequence?" Dora gasped. "Please go for Doctor Graysdon at once."

"It's really nothing to be alarmed about," protested the nurse gently. "Quite natural. And Dr. Graysdon asked that he should not be summoned to-night unless he was really needed. It's three o'clock."

"Then we must call Dr. Osbourne, in Orchard Road," said Dora determinedly.

"Oh! but, Mrs. Ridgeworth, Dr. Osbourne wouldn't come except at Doctor Graysdon's request—etiquette forbids——"

Dora turned on her heels and hastened back to her room.

A few moments later she stole downstairs and hurried across to fetch Dr. Graysdon. She rang and knocked, and knocked and rang again. There was something faulty with Graysdon's night-bell, and the inner door of the hall shut out the sound of knocking rom those upstairs.

Again she knocked, and again, and yet again, ringing all the time. But there was no response.

She felt a little ashamed of herself because of her indignation at her failure to arouse the doctor. So many of her chickens were coming home to roost. Otherwise she would have gone on to Doctor Osbourne, and obliged him to set professional etiquette aside for once at least; she felt he could not refuse in the circumstances

But the nurse's perfect assurance that Barnaby's delirium was a natural and unalarming consequence of his condition, had begun to communicate itself to her. Graysdon had expected it, and even if she condemned his inaccessibility at night-time, she had great confidence in his judgment and skill.

So, hesitatingly, she went back to the house where Barnaby had dropped into a peaceful, wordless sleep.

She spoke to Graysdon about it next day, as one preferring a veiled accusation. He seemed quite concerned.

"I knew that bell was wrong, and especially told the maids to leave the inner door open, so that I might hear any knocking. I'm awfully sorry. Why didn t you—er—? I—I really am sorry. But it wasn't serious. He's much better this morning. We'll have him out in a few weeks."

Indeed, Barnaby was going on splendidly, a fact which made itself apparent to Dora when, after Graysdon had departed, she relieved the nurse at the bedside. He gave her a smile, bright with intelligent interest, as she sat down beside him, and put out a hand weakly to clasp her own. But he did not speak for a long time, being apparently contented to watch her face and think his thoughts.

"It must have been an awful shock to you, dearest of women," he said at length.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and her fingers tightened upon his hand spasmodically. "It was the first big trouble that had ever come to me. I felt——"

"And you made a bee-line for old Graysdon's red lamp and smashed his window, didn't you?" he asked smiling.

"Yes," she whispered, drooping her head

"And thanks to him——"

"I'm a doctor's wife instead of a doctor's widow!" she exclaimed quickly. "Oh, Barny!—Barny! the first—the very, very first time you are really well and about again, I—I want to light your red lamp myself."

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Real Life Romances.

His Little Niece.

A PRISON ROMANCE.

THE scene of this story is Queen's County Gaol, Long Island City, New York. In one of the cells, convict No. 624 (the figures are imaginary, but they will suffice to distinguish a certain prisoner) was undergoing a long sentence.

One day a pretty girl called at the prison. In her arms she carried a baby, and she asked for permission to see convict No. 624. After a few minutes the warder returned and informed the girl that as the day was not one on which friends were allowed to see prisoners, the governor refused to give his permission.

A look of disappointment came over the girl's face as she received the message.

"But prisoner No. 624 is my brother," she protested, and begged to be allowed to see the governor.

The girl was pretty, undeniably charming, but the warder demurred. Yet the girl persisted in her entreaties, until at last he consented to make a second petition to the governor.

Touched by the story which the warder brought of the girl, the governor this time ordered her to be brought to his office.

"Oh, do, please, sir, let me see my brother for even five minutes," pleaded the girl, while she hugged the baby in her arms. "This is his little niece," and then she told a pathetic story of how her brother had longed to see his sister and the little child, and how at last the girl had resolved to pay a visit to the gaol. "And now you won't let my brother see his little niece," concluded the girl with tears, "and I have travelled such a long way to give him the chance."

After such entreaties it is not difficult to guess that in the end the girl succeeded. The governor gave the required permission, and under the escort of the warder the girl was taken to see convict No. 624.

With a parting kiss the prisoner restored the baby to the girl.

Separated by iron bars, according to prison regulations, the sister saw her brother. The meeting was one on which even the prison official wished he could close his ears, but duty compelled him to be present. The brother was delighted to see his little niece, and the girl lifted the baby over the bars, whilst the warder smiled and pretended to look the other way. At last the allotted time of the visit came to an end. With a parting kiss the prisoner restored the baby to the girl, and she, having thanked the warder, left the prison.

* * * * *

Early the next morning the prison bell rang loudly. Warders were rushing hither and thither. The whole staff was in a state of excitement. Convict No. 624 had escaped during the night. This was not the worst. Nine others had also followed his example, and, too, by the same means. During the night he had sawn through the iron bars that guarded his window. But how had he obtained the tools to perform the feat, some wondered? Only the governor and one warder knew, and recalled the pretty girl with the baby in whose clothes the saw had evidently been concealed.

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A Stroke of Luck.

THE ROMANCE OF AN ADVENTURE WITH A BULL.

TWO tourists were walking beside the banks of the river at Kierling, Styria, and behind them stretched a tract of grass-land, on which a solitary bull was grazing. Suddenly the tourists were startled by an angry bellowing. Unnoticed and silently in the soft grass the bull was running towards them. There was a look in the inflamed eyes of the creature, and the rapidly-moving nostrils, which warned the strangers that their only safety lay in flight. Some hundred yards before them they could see an old farmhouse, and towards this they made frantically, spurred on by the snorting and now furious bull which was galloping almost at their heels seemingly intent on their destruction.

Breathlessly the two men flung themselves against the door of the farmhouse. It yielded instantly, but there was no time to close it against the infuriated bull; so three steps at a time they leapt up the rickety stairs, unheeding the shout of the astonished owner of the place.

They beheld only the head of the animal, motionless and erect.

Once inside a bedroom, and with the door locked, the tourists became aware that a lumbering body was ascending the stairs. A deadly fear came over them as they glanced round the little room and realised how small was the chance that the frail, worm-eaten door would withstand the coming onslaught. Now the bull had reached the little landing. They could hear the flooring outside cracking beneath its hoofs.

The whole farmhouse seemed to quiver under the weight of the great beast. But there was little time to take heed of this. A moment later, with a mighty roar the bull had shivered the door of the little bedroom. Then a miracle seemed to take place before the terrified men. Instead of the great bull with its enormous brown body rushing at them, they beheld only the head of the animal, motionless and erect, its eyes darting hatred and vengeance on them.

The room was full of mortar dust, and clinging to the window frame at the far end of the room, the hapless tourists realised that in the nick of time the floor had collapsed, and that their enemy was imprisoned by the neck, whilst the remainder of his body was in the room below.

And now must be told the strange sequel of the story, which makes it more like a piece of fiction than the plain tale of an actual happening. Some hours later, after the two tourists had been rescued by the owner of the place, who viewed with much concern the ruin of his property, the farmer led them into the room in which, now shot, the body of their old enemy hung through the ceiling. A very rusty old iron box lay on the floor directly beneath the bull. The box must have been hidden in the floor. Crowbar in hand, the excited farmer strove to prise open the rusted iron box. At last the lid gave way. A cry of wonder escaped all three onlookers, as before them lay revealed a vast collection of gold and silver coins, bearing the effigy of the Emperor Charles.

* * * * *

Of course the farmer was not entitled to the whole of his lucky find, which in all amounted to the value of £15,000. But even after the Austrian Government had taken its share of the treasure trove, a great deal more than enough was left to him to pay for the damage that the bull had caused.

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A Search for a Son.

THE ROMANCE OF A MOTHER'S LOVE.

THE heroine of this story is a Russian, who, some eighteen years ago came to America. During the early years of her arrival in the New World she worked hard, and by thrift and a certain good fortune amassed nearly a thousand dollars.

Then she married, and soon, too late, realised that the man, whom she had thought was all the world to her, and she to him, cared only to spend her money at the saloons.

Still, even though each week found her savings at the bank growing less and less, there was some consolation to the poor woman when her little son was born. But one day, some months later, she fell ill, and while her husband promised faithfully to see that the child was cared for, she was taken to the hospital. Weeks passed before the girl was well enough to leave, and when she had recovered, she returned to find that her home had been broken up.

She returned to find that her home had been broken up.

No pen can describe the feelings of the poor woman bereft of her child. For the loss of her husband she cared little, as something had warned her that with the last dollar of her savings drawn from the bank he would leave her.

But if only he had left the child! A fixed determination slowly banished the despair that had at first assailed the woman. She would search the States through. She would find her son.

The child belonged to her far more than to the wretched man who had left her penniless. But first she must work. It would be of little use to find her infant son unless she, his mother, had money to support him.

So year after year rolled by. No woman in all the States worked harder than this mother. But never once did she forget that the first duty of her life was to find her child. Sometimes she took a holiday—not often at first, for money was scarce and railway travelling expensive—and then she would visit the neighbouring towns, seeking to learn if anyone had seen or heard of a man with an infant child. Occasionally she received an answer that filled her with hope; but more often the trembling questioner was rebuked as mad.

Still, these attempts gave courage to the poor woman, and daily, as her savings increased, the hope grew that with money a more systematic search might be possible.

But if fortune was not smiling on the poor mother in quest of her child, it was making compensation in another direction. With her first savings she had bought a piece of land. Within a few years the property had risen threefold. Then she had sold it, and with the proceeds had acquired more land. Soon the once penniless mother became a woman of wealth.

Long before she had reached this position paid men had been searching the country for the one object of her labours. Money, the mother had realised from the first, was able to do most things, and through its means, at last, a clue was discovered that brought her to a foundling hospital. There she learnt that her child had been left by its father, and that some few years later it had been adopted.

The name of the family that had adopted the child was easily found, and the mother claimed her son.

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The Scissors Trick Fully Explained.
(1) Take a pair of scissors and a loop of string. Pass the loop through one handle of the scissors, put it through the rest of the loop and pull tightly. Hand the whole to a member of the audience, pass the free end of the loop over his finger, and request him to remove the string from the scissors without releasing the end.

TRICKS AT THE WORK-TABLE.

By David Devant.

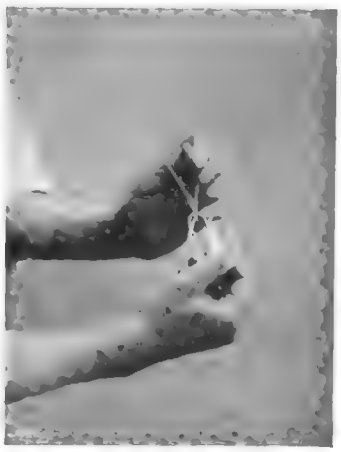
Conjuring being essentially one of the graceful arts, it is, before all things, a charming recreation for ladies. In this article, the third of the series, Mr. Devant, of Maskelyne & Devant, the greatest conjuror in the world, describes a few tricks which any lady can perform with a little practice and a few trifles from her work-table.

I set out to write this chapter having in my mind the requirements of girls who want to be amateur conjurors. Conjuring is a capital hobby for ladies, and I have never been able to understand why it should not be as popular with them as it is with boys of all ages. I say "boys" designedly, because one of the advantages of conjuring is that it keeps you boyish; at least, I am told that it keeps me boyish, and therefore I see no reason why it should not keep a young lady girlish. A conjuror knows that in all his audiences there will be a good percentage of young people, and he has to endeavour to amuse and entertain them. The fact that he is going to do this helps him to look on conjuring from their point of view, and so helps him to preserve his youth.

There is another good reason why young ladies should take to conjuring as a hobby; it is a most graceful accomplishment. I should not like anyone to infer from this that I regard myself as being in the least degree graceful; but, then, it is not the business of any man to be graceful.

However, I can promise any young lady who takes to conjuring that if she is at all inclined to be graceful the practice of a few tricks will make her quite as graceful as a swan. If she has pretty wrists and hands she will be able to show them off to the best possible advantage.

There is still one more good reason why young ladies should make a hobby of conjuring; they will find audiences very appreciative. Amateur pianists, vocalists, and reciters are too numerous; the average drawing-room audience, being nice and polite, listens to all of them, but reserves its genuine appreciation for the youth who puzzles them with a few conjuring tricks. It is not difficult to learn enough about conjuring to do this, and it is not at all necessary to stay indoors to take all the lessons. You can learn part of them when you are on the tops of 'buses, or in trains, or are out walking.



(2) When showing him how to do it, as it appears impossible, take hold of the end of the loop which is close to the scissors, pull on it, and pass it over the scissors, when they are free.

I have called this chapter "Tricks at the Work-table" because the various articles used in the tricks are those which would naturally be in the possession of any young lady. There is no reason why the tricks should be performed while one is standing near the work-table. And now for the first of our tricks.

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A NEW DRYING MACHINE.

"Allow me," says the conjuror, "to call your attention to my new drying machine—this fan—very useful in laundries and at cricket grounds on a rainy day. To show it at work I will first saturate these pieces of coloured tissue paper by dipping them into this glass of water. I now squeeze them thoroughly—and a little more, and fan them, when, if the machine works properly—ah! I see that it does." A shower of coloured confetti falls from the conjuror's hand, and it is fanned upwards as it falls.

This very pretty little trick always goes well, far better, in fact, than many a trick which depends for its working on an expensive piece of apparatus; and yet the secret is very simple. Have a fan similar in appearance to the one used in another trick, and then the audience will not suspect any trickery in the fan. But that is where the trickery lies.

Make up a small bunch of confetti in a piece of white tissue paper; screw up one end of the little parcel, open the fan, and put the end of the screwed up tissue paper between two of the folds of the fan; then close the fan, and the parcel will be attached to it. Come forward, holding the fan in the right hand. Have some pieces of coloured tissue paper and a glass of water on the table. Just before you put the pieces of paper into the water put the fan in the left hand. It is only natural that you should handle the papers with your right hand, and therefore that movement will not seem suspicious.

Take up the papers with the right hand, dip them into the water, take out the messy little lump of wet paper and squeeze it with the right hand, shaking off the drops of water. Put it into the left hand, and shake off some more of the water. In putting the wet paper into the left hand it is only natural that you should take the fan with your right hand, because you are going to use the fan. Leave the parcel of confetti in the left hand, which now holds the wet paper. Open out the fan and begin to fan the closed left hand.

A NEW DRYING MACHINE.—(1) Exposed view, showing the little packet of confetti attached to the fan.

(2) The fan is passed into the left hand, leaving the packet of confetti there. The right hand puts some pieces of tissue paper in the glass of water.

Break the parcel of confetti by squeezing it, and let a little of the confetti escape from the bottom of the left hand. If you have arranged things properly you will be able to get a kind of coloured snowstorm effect from the confetti. When you get nearly to the end of your parcel open out the hand and let the sodden tissue paper, which, being wet, goes into a very small compass, drop through your fingers to the floor. It will not be noticed.

The conjuror may find a little difficulty in passing the fan, with the ball of confetti attached, from the right hand to the left hand in such a way that the audience get no glimpse of the confetti. The little ball should be concealed by the hands all the time, and the best way to learn how to do this is to practise the trick before a looking-glass. Nearly all tricks should be rehearsed in this way until the hands take the right positions through sheer force of habit.

Above all, remember that in conjuring more than anything does the adage "Practice makes perfect" hold good.

(3) Showing how the wet paper is apparently dried by the fan.

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THE COLOURS AND THE COIN.

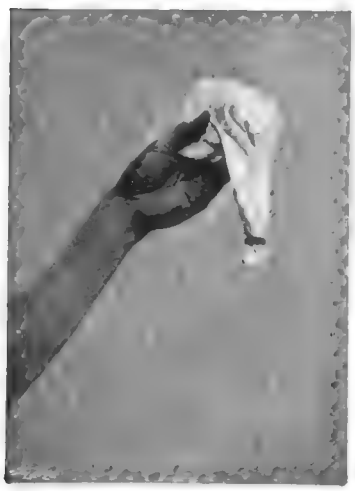
"For my next trick," says the young conjuror, "I wish to borrow a shilling. A ha'penny will do just as well, but a shilling looks better; besides (*taking the shilling from the lender*), as there is just the chance that the shilling may be lost altogether, I naturally prefer a shilling to a ha'penny.

"I should like somebody else to mark the shilling with a knife in such a way that it may be recognised again—if it should be found when I've finished with it—as the actual shilling which I borrowed. Perhaps someone will scratch the shilling with a knife (*taking it back and looking at it*). Thank you. That's a good mark. I don't think anybody would ever take that shilling to be a good one now, but as it's not mine no harm's done to me.

"I am going to wrap that shilling in this handkerchief—an ordinary white handkerchief. I don't know whether you would like to examine it, but you are welcome to if you wish to. I spread out the handkerchief on my left hand and put the shilling right in the centre. You will agree with me, I think, that the shilling is now lying on the top of the handkerchief. Now (*closing the fingers of the left hand and pushing the shilling into the handkerchief with the right hand*) I want you to notice that the shilling is really wrapped up in the handkerchief. I fold over the corners of the handkerchief—so, and put it into this empty tumbler. I have here a bag containing several little balls of wool of different colours

THE COLOURS AND THE COIN.—(1) How the coin is vanished: first, a small rubber ring is in the left hand under the handkerchief.

(2) Push the coin well home, and so through the rubber ring.



(3) Where the coin really goes.

—red, blue, pink, yellow, white, black, and green (*takes the balls of wool out of the bag, shows them, and puts them back into the bag*). I have here another bag, similar to that one, but containing a lot of reels of silk of different colours (*takes them out, shows them, and puts them back into the bag*).

"I want someone to put their hand into the bag and to take out a reel. Perhaps you wouldn't mind putting in your hand? Just pretend it's an offertory bag. I am going to use one of the balls of wool in this trick, and I want you to have a free choice as to which it shall be. I will use the ball which is the same colour as the reel of silk which you pick out of the bag.

"Red, you say?

"Very well, we will use the red ball of wool. I take it out of the bag and put it into this empty tumbler. Now, before we go any farther, let me just remind you of what I have done. I have borrowed a shilling, and it has been marked in such a way that the owner will know it again. I have wrapped the shilling in a handkerchief, and placed it in this glass. From a number of balls of wool you have chosen the red one, which I have put in this glass. The balls of wool have been before you all the time, and it was open for you to choose any other colour.

"The trick is very simple. I take up the handkerchief,

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THE COLOURS AND THE COIN.—(4) The trick bag, showing the division down the centre.

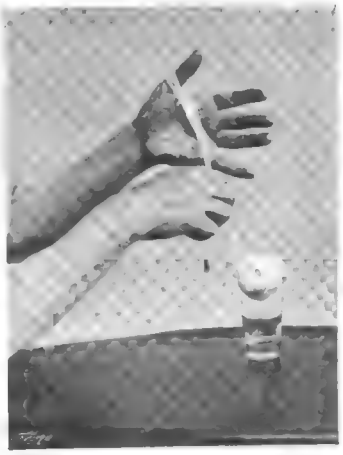
and ask the shilling to go away and get inside the ball of wool. One, two, three, go! (*Flicks away the handkerchief.*) You see the shilling really has gone, and if the owner of the shilling does not mind unwinding the wool he will find his shilling in the middle of it."

This trick is my own improvement on a very old trick, but I imagine that even if there should be someone in the audience acquainted with the old trick they will have to guess a few times before they can explain the new version.

It will be fairly obvious to everyone that the shilling which is wrapped in the handkerchief is not the marked shilling. The conjuror begins by having a shilling concealed at the bottom part of the second and third fingers of the right hand. The hand must be held palm downwards, so that the shilling is not seen. The borrowed shilling is taken between the first finger and thumb of the same hand. In turning to pick up the handkerchief the conjuror closes the hand slightly, thus pushing the borrowed shilling down the thumb until it is held securely for a moment by the thumb being bent over it. Then the tip of the thumb pushes up the concealed shilling, and the borrowed one takes its place at the bottom of the second and third fingers. The two movements are made in the fraction of a second, and if the hand moves at the same time to pick up the handkerchief they should be quite imperceptible.

The next step is to arrange for the vanishing of the shilling. The simplest way of doing this is to use a little piece of apparatus, price one penny. The article I refer to is known as an umbrella ring, but it makes an excellent "vanisher" for a coin. The ring should be lying on the table, just behind the handkerchief, and it is quite an easy matter to pick up the two together, and then to take the handkerchief from the left hand with the right hand, and leave the ring in the left hand, which is partly closed, and thus conceals it. When the handkerchief is spread out over the left hand the ring is, of course, completely hidden. Do not do what I once saw an enthusiastic, but absent-minded, young conjuror do—or, rather, attempt to do—hide the handkerchief and hold up the ring for inspection.

(5) How the shilling is got into the centre of the ball of wool. The tube is afterwards pulled out.



(6) Unwinding the wool. The coin eventually drops into the glass.

Having got the ring and the handkerchief into position, push the shilling into the handkerchief and thus through the ring, and allow the audience to see that it is actually there before you fold over the handkerchief and hide it. While the audience are looking at the shilling in the handkerchief the conjuror quietly drops the other shilling — the marked one—behind the bag of wool on the table. The conjuror must be looking all the time at the left hand, for this will help to make the audience look in the same direction.

Directly the shilling goes into the rubber ring the fingers must grip it tightly, otherwise there will be a danger of the shilling jumping out of the handkerchief, and then the conjuror will get the kind of laugh that it is not desirable to hear. With this simple precaution attended to the vanishing of the shilling cannot fail. The corners

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of the handkerchief should be folded over the ring and the shilling, and then there will be no clue to the mystery when the handkerchief is put into the empty glass.

The next step is to get the marked shilling into the middle of the ball of red wool. The ball of wool is wound round a small flat tube of tin or thin cardboard, one end of which sticks out of the wool. The other end is, of course, in the centre of the wool. The red ball of wool, so prepared, is placed in the bag with the others. The conjuror picks up the marked shilling, which, it will be remembered, is lying on the table behind the bag, and before taking out the first ball of wool to show the audience she slips the shilling into the tube in the red ball of wool.

The next time the conjuror's hand goes into the bag to take out the next ball of wool her hand pulls the tube out of the red ball of wool, and thus leaves the shilling in the centre of the wool. When all the balls of wool have been taken out the tin tube is left in the bag. In taking out the red ball the conjuror should squeeze it slightly, and then the fact that it has been tampered with will never be noticed.

The last question to be answered is: How did you make someone choose a red reel of silk?

It is obvious that if a reel of silk of any other colour were chosen the conjuror would have to admit that the trick was "off."

The bag containing the reels of silk is really composed of two bags joined together. Make a bag about as big as an ordinary offertory bag, but without any handle. It can be made of cloth or paper. Then make another bag just like the first, and join the two together. You will thus have one big bag with a partition in the centre formed of the two sides of two bags. This partition must be stitched closely so that it can be easily moved from one side to the other.

Another way of making the trick bag is to fasten one side of an extra bag to the first one. The effect is just the same. Into one compartment of the trick bag the conjuror puts the reels of different colours; the other side holds a number of reels, but all of one colour—red. The reels of different colours are first taken out of the bag, shown to the audience, and put back, but when the conjuror holds the bag for someone to take out a reel the partition is held against one side of the bag, so that the person selecting a reel is compelled to take one of the red ones.

The rest of the trick needs no explanation, but some little care should be taken in picking the handkerchief out of the tumbler and flicking it out to show that the shilling is not there. Do this very quickly, but keep the ring and the shilling away from the audience, and be careful that the shilling does not hit against some hard substance—such as the table—and give itself away. When the owner of the shilling unwinds the wool hold the glass so that everyone may see that the shilling really was in the middle of the wool.

A KNOTTY PROBLEM.—Showing the extra loop on the piece of tape. It is the loop which is cut.

Do not be discouraged if things do not go quite right the first time. Many years ago, when I was an enthusiastic amateur conjurer, I was doing a trick in which I borrowed a halfpenny. I was so excited when the trick succeeded that in returning the halfpenny to the gentleman who had lent it to me I accidentally knocked off his gold spectacles and broke them. He thought it was a joke until he found that I was not going to mend the glasses again by magic.

A KNOTTY PROBLEM.

There is no need for the amateur conjuror to give each trick a name during the performance; I am giving names to the tricks because it helps one to remember them afterwards. I should forget how many tricks I know if I did not remember their titles. Our next little trick is very simple. I do not pretend that the effect is new, but it is produced in a new way, and anyone knowing the old trick will be a little puzzled with my version of it.

The conjuror takes a new piece of white tape from her work-basket, breaks the cottons that hold it together, unfolds the tape, and cuts it in half. Taking up one half, she folds

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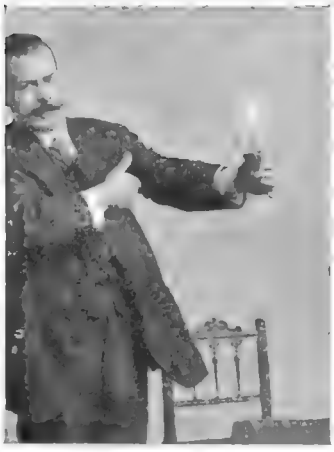
SILK FROM PAPER.—(1) Pulling up the right sleeve and showing that nothing is hidden there.



(2) Pulling up the left sleeve to show that nothing is there, and secretly getting the roll of ribbons from the armpit.

(3) Throwing out the ribbon, and secretly getting hold of the Union Jack (exposed view).

it again in half, and invites someone to cut it and to tie the two ends together. She throws a handkerchief over the knot and hands the two ends for two persons to hold. Then she fans the handkerchief for a moment or two, and, drawing it away, shows that the knot has mysteriously disappeared and that the two pieces of tape have been joined together.

In the old form of the trick the conjuror was advised to fold the tape in a certain way, which was always more or less suspicious. By taking a new piece of tape—or, rather, a piece which is apparently quite new—the conjuror is more likely to deceive the audience than she would if she adopted the old method of doing the trick.

The end of tape which is inside the skein must be pulled out gently, so as not to undo the rest, and about two and a half inches must be cut off. Make this piece into a loop by stitching the two ends strongly together, and then pass the end of the tape from which the piece has been cut through the loop. Then tuck the end of the tape back into its place, and fold the loop two or three times, so that its presence is not noticed. Then when you unwind the tape it appears to be a new piece. Unwind it from the inside, and thus get the end with the loop over it in the left hand. Cut the tape in half, and keep the piece with the loop over it in the left hand.

When you divide this piece in half and ask someone to cut it in the centre you run the loop along in your left hand, hiding the join in the hand, and it is this loop which is cut. The two ends are tied together, and thus the loop is really tied round the long piece of tape. When you drop the handkerchief over the knot you secretly slide away the loop just as the handkerchief touches the tape, and therefore there is nothing under the handkerchief. Slide the loop along the tape in handing one end for someone to hold, and then you can slide it off the tape altogether, and the trick is practically done. The loop remains hidden in the hand.

SILK FROM PAPER.

I always advise my pupils to leave the stage after each trick. Experience has taught me that audiences like to have a little leisure in which to discuss what they have seen. Besides, the conjuror lessens the difficulties of a performance if he can retire for a minute after each trick. In any case it is absolutely necessary that the conjuror should go behind the scenes and make a few preparations before this next trick, which I used to perform myself at the Egyptian Hall.

"I have three pieces of paper—red, white, and blue. I am going to burn them. I light them first; I find they burn better that way. (*Screws the papers up and puts them into the flame of a candle.*) I want you to notice that I have nothing in my hands except the papers—nothing up this sleeve, and nothing up that sleeve. By rubbing the ashes of these pieces of paper together I get a quantity of silk ribbon of the same colour as the papers—

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SILK FROM PAPER.—(4) Gathering up the ribbons in short lengths so that they can be hidden behind the flag when it is unfurled. It is now screwed up in the right hand.

(5) Showing the flag apparently made by blending the ribbons together. The ribbons are hidden behind the flag.

(6) Exposed view of previous photograph.

red, white, and blue—and by blending some of these ribbons together I get something which I need not describe. (*Unfolds a large Union Jack.*)"

The conjuror has at least four yards of red, white, and blue ribbons—twelve yards in all. These are stitched together at one end, and a small piece of silk of the same colour as the conjuror's dress—black for preference—is stitched to them. The conjuror rolls up the ribbons by beginning at the loose ends, and when the roll is completed the piece of silk is wrapped over it, and it is placed under the top part of the left arm, which prevents it from falling down. The Union Jack is "bunched up" carelessly and pushed into the waist-belt on the left-hand side, and a little towards the back. If the pieces of paper and a lighted candle are on the table the conjuror is ready to perform.

The pieces of paper are picked up with the right hand, and the ends are twisted together tightly, otherwise the papers would burn too quickly and scorch the conjuror's hands. The papers are held in the flame of the candle for a second, and while they are burning the conjuror draws attention to her empty left hand, and then to the fact that her right hand contains only the burning papers. When the conjuror is going to show that she has nothing concealed in her sleeves she draws up the right sleeve with the left hand.

Then, in order to be able to draw up the left sleeve with the right hand, she is obliged to put the papers into the left hand. In drawing up the left sleeve the conjuror gets possession of the roll of ribbons, closes her hand over them, and then squashes up the burnt papers. In doing this she gets hold of the piece of silk with her right hand, and, bringing her right hand slightly towards the body, and turning a little to the left, she throws her right hand vigorously forward, and the ribbons unfold. At the same time the conjuror's left hand takes out the Union Jack, and brings it forward quickly to the ribbons and unfolds it.

The ribbons must be gathered up in such a way that they are hidden behind the flag, and the simplest way to do this is to transfer the flag secretly from the left hand to the right, and to gather up the ribbons in short lengths. The ribbons and flag are bunched up together in the right hand, and even if the hand is open the presence of the flag will not be noticed.

A little soft music played during the performance of a trick always improves the effect; the music for this trick should end up with "Rule Britannia!" played loudly.

The conjuror must be careful not to expose the ribbons when she is leaving the stage. A very simple way of avoiding this mistake is to spread out the flag over a tray and let the ribbons fall under the flag. The tray can then be put on one side of the stage if the conjuror wishes to go straight on to the next trick.

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MY CRIPPLE CHILD

1

I watch my darling day by day,
My little cripple child;
It breaks my heart to see the pain
In her blue eyes so mild.

2

When she was scarcely six months old
Her sufferings began;
How changed is my own darling now!—
Her thin, sweet face how wan!

3

Her first misfortune was a leg,
Which came off at the knee;
And though she had the best of aid,
Put back it could not be.

4

Soon after this she lost one arm,
And then the other leg;
Yet in her pain she shed no tear—
So brave is my sweet Meg.

5

She once had lovely golden hair,
And now she's bald instead;
And lately she has had knocked off
A big piece of her head.

6

Yet no misfortune, I am sure,
My love for her can kill;
For she will always be to me
The best of dollies still.

Herbert J. Brandon.

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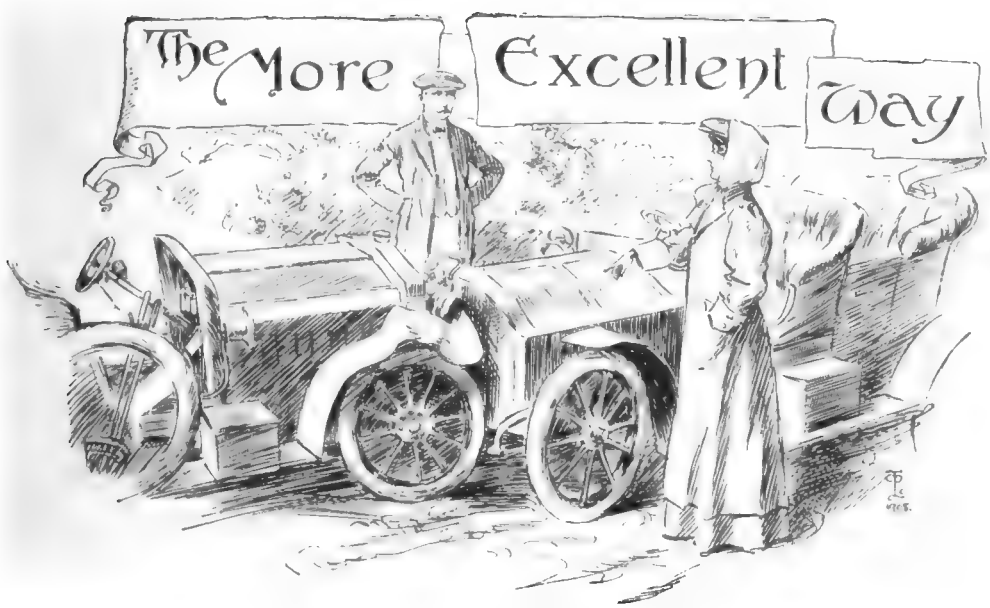

How a Motor Smash Made a Marriage.

By Chris Sewell.

The man motorist first perceived the inevitability of the collision.

He did not waste time in wondering how to act, but, swerving into the bank, clapped on every brake, and set his teeth.

The girl motorist *almost* kept her head, but not quite. First she used up valuable breath in shouting, and then she turned her steering wheel just the fraction of an inch the wrong way. The bonnets of the respective cars met with a horrid, grinding smash. The man took an involuntary upward movement, and landed sideways in the hedge; whilst the girl, getting less of the shock, rocked, bumped, and remained in her seat.

The cars fizzed and snorted like angry dragons.

The man stood up and shook himself; he was not damaged, but none the less angry for that. The girl jumped from her car, and they stood facing one another, glaring most revengefully.

"How disgracefully—abominably careless of you!" cried the girl, breathless with anger; "I—I hope you're *hurt!*"

He flushed a furious carmine.

"Sorry your hopes are not destined to be realised," he responded acidly. "I am not hurt, but my car is. I was a fool not to stop dead when I saw you coming, but I thought you *might* be the exception which proves the rule."

"What rule?" she demanded haughtily.

"That female motor drivers should be relegated to forty-acre meadows, and not allowed to experiment on high roads."

"How—how dare you speak to me like that?" she gasped.

"How dare you come bull-rushing round corners, madam, and making scrap-iron of new Daimlers? Look at that!" He bent down and picked up a piece of twisted brass that had once been a lamp, and held it out to her.

"Why, it was entirely your fault; and if it comes to damage, perhaps you'll kindly observe this!" She pointed a dramatic hand to a bent mudguard and a very much dented radiator.

He threw an angry glance in the direction she indicated.

"I should like your name and address," he observed, getting out a pocket-book.

"I was just going to ask you for yours," she retorted.

He produced a card-case, and handed her a card with dignity. She looked at it.

"Mr. Cyprian Hewlett, The Towers, Felsington."

"My name is Floyd," she told him

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haughtily. "Miss Adela Floyd, Grangeway, Coostoke."

He wrote this down. Coostoke and Felsington were only a few miles apart—he wondered that he had never seen this red Gladiator, with its well-kept lamps, before.

She climbed again into her seat, and backed the still snorting car, and carefully tested its powers. It presented a dismal appearance in front, but the machinery was apparently uninjured.

"It will cost ten pounds to put this right—at least," she threw over her shoulder; "I will get an estimate as soon as possible, and forward you the bill for repairs."

"That's very kind of you," he said grimly, "but it happens that twenty pounds won't cover the havoc you've made here. I shall be glad if you will settle for that at your earliest convenience."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," she said, and started down the road.

"Then our lawyers must fight it out," he shouted after her.

"As you like," she called, and touf-toufed away.

* * * * *

Mr. Gregson Deane, solicitor, of the firm of Deane, Powell, & Selby, was, alas! exceedingly harassed. Within the compass of one short afternoon (at different times, luckily) his dingy office had been invaded by a flushed and voluble young lady and a good-looking, but singularly determined young man.

He had known them both in the far-off days of knickers and cambric pinnies, and he cherished an unprofessional affection for them. Nor had he the least desire to see them flying, so to speak, at one another's throats.

So he schemed and temporised, and soothed and advised each in turn, and with great wiliness suppressed the trifling fact that he had been consulted by either side.

"They tell you at the garage that it will be a week before you can use your car again, and that the repairs will run well into seven pounds? Ah—hum—quite so—but still, my dear Miss Adela, I advise caution. You've no witnesses, you see; it is word against word. Let us write this Mr. Hewlett a conciliatory letter, laying the case before him, and asking him what he is prepared to do? . . ."

"'Infernally bad driving,' you say, Hewlett? 'She never ought to have been allowed out with a car.' Just so, just so. Still, litigation (and if Miss Floyd turns nasty it may come to that, you know) is very expensive. Better let us send her a line, just sounding her, as it were. Now, don't you think so?"

He bowed each in turn politely out, and then, pushing some papers into a drawer, he retrieved his hat and stick and went home.

He never discussed business affairs with his wife, who was the best-natured soul on earth, but a wee bit inclined to be pleasantly garrulous. Had he discussed this business affair with her, she might possibly have confided to him that the couple of blue-scented notes with which she busied herself whilst he dozed over his paper were to Adela Floyd and "that nice boy" who had lately come to The Towers, and "looked so lonely, poor fellow."

* * * * *

The Deanes' old-fashioned garden was alive with children.

Mrs. Deane, though devoted to them as a species, was a little overwhelmed by numbers, and greeted Miss Floyd on her arrival with effusion.

"*So* good of you Adela, dear! Now would you mind starting the 'Mulberry Bush' round the sun-dial—they all seem to want it—whilst I gather 'Nuts in May' on the bowling green? Thanks so much."

Miss Floyd smilingly collected her forces and plunged into the game with abandon—she loved children, and was at her very best among them.

"This is the way we wash our face—wash our face—wash our face."

The fun was fast and furious, and then quite suddenly Adela's glad soprano trailed off, and she clutched the hands of the two children on either side of her so tightly that they wriggled to get free.

Across the lawn, a bright smile on his face as if he actually dared to be fond of children, too, came the one man in the world she had no wish to see—her only deadly foe—the creature who might have killed her but for her own marvellous presence of mind—Mr. Cyprian Hewlett of The Towers, Felsington!

The "Mulberry Bush" stopped as if it had been metaphorically felled by a metaphoric axe—the children stared, and Mrs. Deane hurried over from her "Nuts in May," bland and sublimely unconscious of any strain, bent only on introductions.

"Mr. Hewlett—Miss Floyd," she said pleasantly, presenting them to each other. "I've been so anxious for you to meet; you're both so capital with children; I know you'll make the party go. Two good helpers, I say, are better than half-a-dozen indifferent ones. Yes, children, we'll have 'Oranges

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and Lemons' by all means—of course we will!"

She turned away to confer with her young guests, and Adela was dizzily conscious of a broad, brown hand being raised to a hat, and then uncertainly extended towards her.

It was impossible to make a scene on dear, kind Mrs. Deane's lawn, so she dazedly put out a hand to meet it.

Of course he would understand this was only a veiled armistice. The look she gave him with the handshake was meant to explain that.

The children were still clamouring for "Oranges and Lemons," and Adela felt in her bones that more trying things than mere hand-shakes were to happen. She was right.

In a few seconds, she, with shining eyes and burning cheeks, and her implacable foe stood with their hands clasped and their arms raised, whilst a string of excited youngsters surged beneath the arch so formed.

Mrs. Deane—flustered, short-sighted Mrs. Deane, had arranged it.

"I am so ridiculously tiny," she had pleaded, when Adela showed a disposition to jib.

"It's no use," thought Adela desperately to herself. "I must submit with a good grace."

She just glanced at her vis-à-vis; his eyes were very blue and rather kindly, and he, too, was red in the face.

He, too, was horribly *distrait* and nervous—she almost felt sorry for him.

To relieve the tension, she plunged suddenly into the refrain.

"'When will you pay me?' say the bells of Old Bailey," sang Adela lustily.

Then a horrible desire seized her to laugh hysterically at the singular appropriateness of the words!

An irresistible temptation assailed her to see if he had noticed it.

"I wonder if he thinks I sang it on purpose?" she said to herself.

His good-looking face was less crimson, but it was very set, and she decided that he had no humour. He held her hands very loosely, just grasping the tips of her fingers. This (most unreasonably) annoyed Adela.

"He treats me as if I were a leper," she thought resentfully.

"Oranges and Lemons" came at length to an end. Mr. Hewlett as "Lemons" was triumphantly pulled over by Adela and her tail of children amid screams.

He was forced to clasp her hands tightly for this, and she felt viciously glad of it.

She looked curiously at him again. He certainly had a delightful way with children. His face changed utterly when his glance fell on them, and—yes, it was useless to deny it, he had a very attractive smile.

Adela came to the reluctant conclusion that, given a more propitious beginning, she might have liked him in time.

They both played wildly, rushing the children from game to game, to give themselves no time for conversation.

Mr. Gregson Deane came back from his office early; his wife had pressed him to do so, "because you'll love to see the dear things playing, Greg — now, don't pretend you won't!"

Greg didn't pretend he wouldn't, but some spirit of caution prompted him to peep round a laurustine bush before he joined the revels.

Mrs. Deane was indoors superintending the preparations for tea.

Mr. Gregson Deane said "Great Scott!" pulled out his spectacles and put them on his nose and peeped again.

About thirty children were deep in the squealing delights of "Blind Man's Buff." A tall, broad young man in a familiar suit was blind man, while a girl of equally familiar aspect, with a pretty, flushed face, darted hither and hither among the children eluding his vigilant arms.

Mr. Gregson Deane took off his spectacles and put them carefully in their case. "How *exactly* like Eliza!" said he. Then he went indoors, and no power on earth would induce him to show himself on the lawn.

"No, no, my dear," he protested, when urged to do so by Mrs. Deane, "I've had a bit of a shock, if you must know; I'm not quite the thing. Oh! yes, one of my trying cases, as usual. There! you go and look after the kiddies, and say I've a headache if anyone asks—which they won't."

And when Mrs. Deane had departed, he slapped his knee and shook with suppressed chuckles.

* * * * *

A children's party without accidents is an improbable if not an impossible function. On this occasion the mishap took the form of a tumble on the gravel walk. The victim was a charming, dimpled tot of four, and the small white forehead came into sharp collision with an ugly clinker, which formed part of a rockery and bordered the walk. With a bound Cyprian Hewlett instantly left the game and dashed with long-legged strides across the lawn and snatched the little thing up.

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Cyprian Hewlett stood over them tugging his moustache.

Clumsily, but very tenderly, he essayed to mop the bleeding brow and stay the wails of woe.

His face was full of commiseration. But little "Tossie," though as a rule a born coquette, wanted a woman's hand and a woman's voice now.

She yelled louder than ever, and tried to push Hewlett away.

Telling the children to go on with the game, which they did quite obediently, Adela came to the rescue.

The child held out her arms at once, and Adela, taking her from Hewlett with an apologetic smile (which she tried to keep from being pleasant and failed), sat down on the wooden steps which reached from the drawing-room window to the garden, gathering the child to her as only a woman can. Cyprian Hewlett stood over them tugging his moustache. He was sympathetic and very wondering. And this was the virago who had "hoped he was hurt" only a week ago!

Adela raised her face and held out a soft, small handkerchief. "Please wet it at the tap," she commanded; "she'll soon be better, won't you, precious?"

And "precious," with the elasticity of her kind, soon was better, and playing gaily as before.

But the episode had left Cyprian Hewlett with a warm, curious feeling somewhere inside his broad chest, which he could not analyse as yet.

* * *

The children were departing. Innumerable kisses had been exchanged, and little groups, duly hatted, now went reluctantly down the drive.

"You're not going to walk, dear?" Mrs. Deane held Adela's hand in dismay.

"Indeed I am."

"But your beautiful motor——?"

"It's—er—er—out of order," said Adela hastily. "Good-bye!"

"But you shall *not* walk!" declared Mrs. Deane hospitably. "It's five miles if it's an inch—why"—inspiration illuminated her features—"Mr. Hewlett goes your way—he lives at Felsington, you know, just beyond you. He'll give you a lift, I know."

"I shall be delighted," said Cyprian Hewlett, and his voice shook a little.

"I—I couldn't think of troubling you," said Adela very hurriedly, and trying to escape.

"But you won't trouble him," Mrs. Deane protested; "I *insist!*"

She did—and she got her way.

And as a most unexpected finale to this remarkable afternoon, Adela found herself sitting quite calmly in the very Daimler she had rammed and disdainfully left on the roadside not many days before.

They ran out of the drive into the road.

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Mrs. Deane waving ecstatically, and sped along in silence.

Cyprian Hewlett broke the silence suddenly—almost gruffly—and in great trepidation he spoke.

"Miss Floyd," he said, "do you know I—I don't believe we"—he stopped and skilfully skirted a waggon which was bearing down upon them—"we were made to quarrel?"

He looked at her very anxiously. "I'm *sure* we weren't," agreed Adela with a sigh of relief.

"That beastly smash was all my fault. I—I apologise—I will—I am *anxious* to pay that repair bill."

"Nonsense!" cried Adela, "you'll do nothing of the kind. Besides, it was really all through me. I'll——"

The motor slowed down at this point, because the explanations were long and not compatible with the exacting business of driving a car.

And it was such an eminently agreeable explanation that it ultimately took some weeks, and—but there is no need to finish!

* * *

"Eliza," said Mr. Gregson Deane very carelessly over his breakfast egg next morning, "I forgot to ask you how young Hewlett and Miss Adela got on together?"

"Oh! excellently," his wife told him. "They were splendid with the children. He took her home in his motor, too, as hers was out of repair."

"Humph," said Mr. Gregson Deane. He methodically opened two letters which had obviously been posted the night before. They ran as follows:

The Towers,
Felsington.

DEAR MR. DEANE,

I have decided not to proceed with the action against Miss Floyd. Litigation is such a waste of money.

Yours sincerely,
CYPRIAN HEWLETT.

Grangeway,
Coostoke.

DEAR MR. DEANE,

On thinking it over it seems absurd to sue Mr. Hewlett for such a paltry sum as £7, so I'll let the matter drop.

Many thanks for all your kind advice.

Yours sincerely,
ADELA FLOYD.

Then did Mr. Gregson Deane chuckle once more; but for all his wife's entreaties he would give no explanation.

* * * * *

In course of time—not a long course either—the neighbourhood was duly fluttered over a smart and most interesting wedding.

The motor slowed down at this point, because the explanations were long.

"So romantic!" babbled a gushing young creature in a flower hat to Mr. Deane as they waited together on the steps of Grangeway to speed the happy pair on their way. "He fell in love with her at first sight, you know."

Mr. Deane rubbed his chin and looked profound. His eye fell upon a brand new lamp, and a neat seam in the brass rim of the radiator pertaining to the Daimler which was to bear the bride and bridegroom away.

"Indeed?" said Mr. Deane, "*indeed?*"

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MRS. BUTTERWICK'S PAST

How a Wife Was Subdued.

By Brinsley Moore.

"Let bygones be bygones—that's wot I always say. If things is goin' on pleasant, don't be too anxious to rake up wot's past and gone. You may do a lot more 'arm than you think by diggin' up things as is best kep' buried. And there's incidents in ev'rybody's past 'ist'ry as isn't——"

The landlord of the Blue Pig paused in his philosophic disquisition to thrust his head through the open window for the purpose of identifying the back of a passer-by.

"Ah," he said, as he returned to his seat, "I thought it was 'im. It's Silas Butterwick—a man as could give you good evidence of wot I'm talkin' about. As 'appily circumstanced as anyone could wish to be was Silas Butterwick—reg'lar work, a nice little 'ome, and a pleasant widder woman for a wife, as 'e got acquainted with while on a visit to some friends in Wiltshire. 'E was a good deal luckier than most, was Silas. And yet 'e went near upsettin' it all, and made 'imself miserable for weeks on end by the very mistake as I'm warnin' you agenst.

"It was Jonathan Wicks as first instigated 'im to do it. Jonathan was sittin' 'ere one night, 'oldin' forth in 'is usual way about the mis'ry that comes from women rulin' everythink, and the pity as 'e felt for all married men, when Silas spoke up agenst 'im.

"'I've bin married,' 'e says, 'nigh on two years now,' 'e says, 'and I can still say truthfully as it was the best day's work as ever I did.'

"And 'e was so sure of 'is ground that there and then 'e invited Jonathan to spend an evenin' at 'is 'ouse to see 'ow comfortable 'e was. And that bein' a Monday, Jonathan fixed on the follerin' night to go—knowin' Toosday to be washin'-day in these parts and a time when the generality is a bit tired and easily put out by company turnin' up.

"But in spite of the awk'ard day 'e chose, and the topics sootible for quarrillin' as 'e kep' introjuicin' into the conversation, Mrs. Butterwick was quite bright and cheerful all through, and Silas was very proud of the pleasant way in which the evenin' passed off.

"'Well,' 'e says smilin', when 'e met Jonathan Wicks next day, 'wot do you think of it now?'—expectin', you see, to be congratulated.

"But Jonathan wasn't the man to drop out of a persition 'e 'ad once took up.

"'Why,' says 'e, 'the case is even worse than I expected. Anybody could live peaceful as gives way to 'er on every point as you do. You're 'enpecked, man; that's wot it is—'enpecked, and don't know it!'

"''Ow do you mean?' arst Silas.

"'Well,' says Wicks, 'to begin with, she's a deal older than you.'

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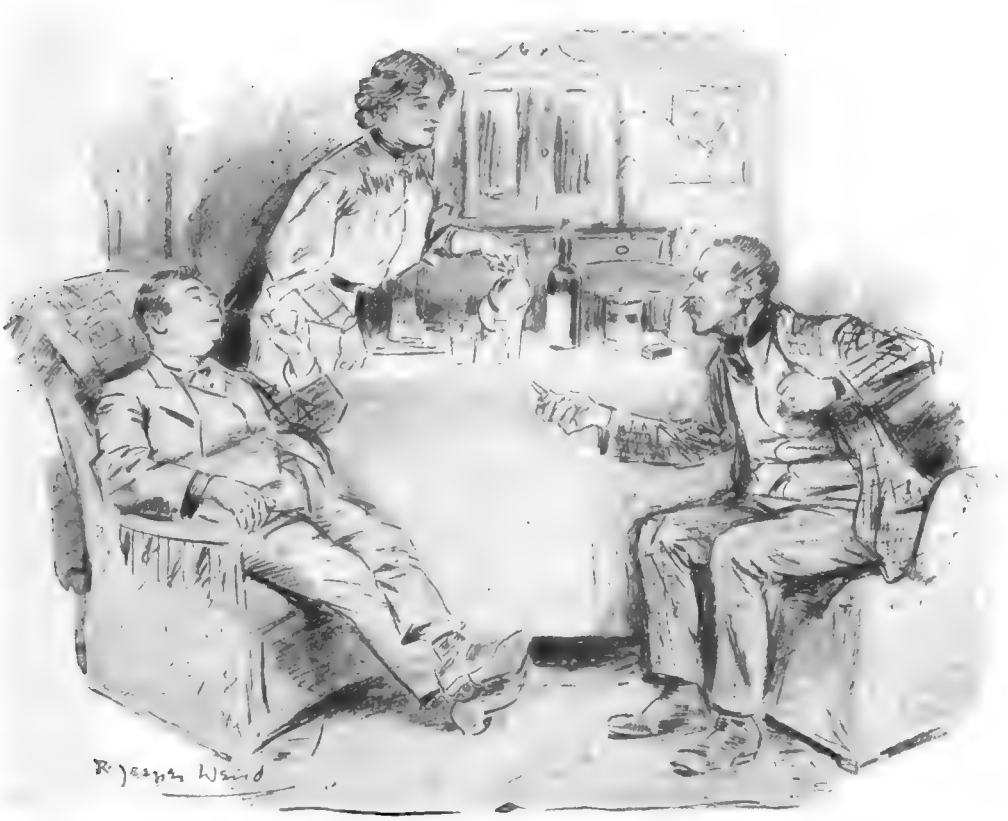

"But in spite of the awk'ard day 'e chose and the topics sootible for quarrillin' as 'e kep' introjuicin' into the conversation, Mrs. Butterwick was quite bright and cheerful all through"

"'Just a year,' says Silas, 'by the marriage register as she signed. I'm thirty-five and she's thirty-six. I arst about that pertic'lar before I took 'er.'

"'Nonsense,' says Wicks. 'She'll never see forty agen. You can tell that by 'er motherly ways, and the 'old she's got over you. I'm sorry for you,' 'e says—'trooly sorry. You're storin' up cert'in trouble for yourself in the future by givin' way to 'er as you do.'

"Silas only laughed at this at first. But when Jonathan looked grieved for 'im every time 'e met 'im, and was always urgin' 'im to get the upper 'and before it was too late, 'e began to feel as there must be somethink in it. And, as Jonathan was careful to point out, it cert'inly *was* a sing'lar thing that Silas was the only man in the 'ole village as never seemed to 'ave a difference with 'is wife.

"'But 'ow can I 'elp it?' arst Silas.

"'Well,' says Wicks, mindful of the good supper they 'ad given 'im, 'if you like to ask me round agen some evenin', I think I could put you on the right lines. It isn't pleasant, of course,' says 'e, 'to 'ave to sit by and see a man led by the nose as you are; but I don't mind bearin' it just once more, if it'll be a 'elp to you.'

"'I—I'm afraid I can't do that,' says Silas. 'You see, she—well, she didn't altogether take to you last time. Directly you'd gone—"Never ask that nasty man in agen, Silas," she says. "'E's a miserable, interferin' wretch," she says, "as would make mischief amongst the angels." Them was 'er very own words.'

"Jonathan wasn't pertic'lar pleased at that, as you may guess.

"'There,' says 'e; 'it's just wot I tell you—you're not even allowed to choose your own friends. And you call yourself a man! I'll tell you wot *I* should do in a case like yours. "Martha," I should say casually, "I'm goin' to ask in my good old friend Jonathan Wicks next Monday, so mind you get a nice little spread ready for 'im." Then if she made any fuss about it, I should just simply

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look at 'er straight and say very decided: "Now, let's 'ave no discussion about it, or you'll be sorry for it. I'm goin' to 'ave no more nonsense from you. Woman, *I know your past!*'

"'Wot good will that do?' arsts Silas, openin' 'is eyes.

"'All the good in the world,' says Jonathan, very prompt. 'Take your own self, for instance. Would you like every mortal thing as you 'ave ever done to come out and be known by everybody? No, of course you wouldn't. There's very few men as would. And,' says Jonathan, 'you may take it from me as one that knows wot 'e is talkin' of, there isn't a woman alive as could face it for a minute. Young or old, they've all got somethink in the background as they wouldn't 'ave known for worlds. And at 'er age, it's a safe shot as is absolutely certain to tell. She'll be under your 'eel for life, the moment she 'ears as you know the past.'

"'But I don't,' says Silas. 'Beyond the fact that she was a respectable widder when I married 'er, I don't know anythink about 'er. And if ever I try to find out and allood to early days, she turns it off suddin, as if she didn't want to talk about it.'

"'Then it's all the more sure,' answers Jonathan. 'Depend upon it, there *is* somethink as she doesn't want you to know. And there's your trump card to play. You'll be master for life the very moment you say to 'er plainly: "I know all your past!"'

"Well, I don't think myself that Silas ever reelly meant to do it. But wot with meetin' Jonathan almost every day, and the awk'ardness of not darin' to invite 'im in, and the feelin' that on this point, at any rate, 'e was different from other men—'e wasn't altogether settled in 'is mind.

"Then it was as Mrs. Butterwick 'erself brought on the crisis. She'd got 'old of the story of 'ow Silas as a youth 'ad fought another feller over Polly Squires, and she was 'arpin' on it a good deal. It was more by way of a joke than anythink else; and if Silas 'ad passed it off with a laugh, I guess as it would 'ave dropped and no 'arm done. But as Polly Squires 'ad married the other feller after all, it was always rather a sore point with Silas; and when Mrs. Butterwick kep' on bringin' it up, 'e got a bit sick about it, and thought 'e could turn the tables on 'er by 'intin' at wot Jonathan 'ad put in 'is mind.

"'Well,' 'e says, as a sort of experiment, 'we've all of us bin foolish in days gone by And,' says 'e, 'if you're goin' to rake up wot's gone by like this, it's on'y fair as I should warn you that two can play at this game.'

"'Wot do you mean?' said Mrs. Butterwick.

"'Why,' says Silas, very solemn, as 'e repeated 'is lessin, 'I mean this: *I know your past.*'

"She looked so astonished at this that 'e was tempted to go on—still not reelly serious, you understand, but more by way of turnin' the conversation than anythink else.

"'All your past 'ist'ry,' 'e says, 'is known to me as clear as print. That—that secret as you thought you'd kep' from me 'as all come out—I know ev'ry perticlar of it. So don't get botherin' with my past, unless you want yours turned up as well.'

"Then 'e looked across to see 'ow she was takin' it. And mighty surprised 'e was at wot 'e saw. Mrs. Butterwick seemed all struck of a 'eap by 'is words, and was gazin' at 'im as if she couldn't believe 'er ears. Then, with a very white face, she got up and went out of the room, lookin' as if she was goin' to cry. And all that evenin' she was so quiet and subdood that Silas got quite frightened at wot 'e 'ad done.

"It was the same next mornin', and on the day follerin'. All 'er cheerfulness was gone, and she seemed afraid to look 'im in the face. She 'ardly spoke at all, and when she did it was so quiet and submissive that some'ow 'e felt quite ashamed of 'imself. On the third mornin' 'e was so cert'in from the redness of 'er eyes as she 'ad been cryin' that he had just decided to tell 'er it was all a joke, when she took the wind out of 'is sails by wot she said 'erself.

"'With regard to that—that secret as you 'ave found out,' she says, 'it's my dooty to ask your pardin for keepin' it back. I ought to 'ave told you before I married you. And after the wicked way in which I 'ave deceived you, I know, of course, that I can't never expect you to trust me in anythink agen. But I 'umbly 'ope,' she says, beginnin' to cry agen, 'as now you 'ave found it out, you'll never tell a soul about it. I couldn't face folks,' she says, 'if the neighbours ever get to 'ear of it.'

"Which left Silas in such a muddled state of mind that 'e went straight off to let Jonathan Wicks know 'ow awk'ard things 'ad turned out.

"'Didn't I tell you?' says Jonathan. 'I knowed there was sure to be somethink as she was keepin' 'idden. Lord! man, you're the luckiest 'usband in the village! With

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that there secret to allood to, you've got 'er under your thumb for life.'

"But Silas couldn't see it in that light.

"'Apart from the uncomfortableness of 'avin' to keep a secret without knowin' wot it is,' 'e says, 'it's not pleasant to 'ave to live with a wife who 'as done somethink she is ashamed of, and wants it 'ushed up. Say wot you like, it isn't my idea of bein' lucky.'

"And the uncomfortableness of it got clearer as time went on. 'Is 'appy 'ome was all upset. Of nights, 'e and 'is wife used to sit one each side of the fire—'er very silent and with a face full of sorrer, and 'im wonderin' all the time wot wrong thing it could 'ave bin as she 'ad done. 'Is mind used to run over all the crimes in the calendar, from arson to passin' bad money; and if 'e took up the noospaper to distract 'is thoughts, the pleece-court trials was sure to suggest some fresh form of wickedness as she might 'ave bin guilty of. And a knock at the door one night, and, when 'e opened it, a pleeceman standin' there inquirin' for the wrong 'ouse, nearly brought 'is 'eart up into 'is mouth.

"As for conversation, 'e soon found as it wasn't safe even to allood to anythink as 'ad ever 'appened in the past. Not knowin' 'is ground, you see, 'e was certain to stumble unexpected on a topic that suggested the secret, and sent Mrs. Butterwick upstairs in a way as 'e felt was a rebuke. And even the future, which seemed a safe line to take, wasn't really so to a man in the dark as 'e was. Apart from the difficulty of confinin' all your talk to speckilations about things as may never come to pass, 'e found even this might raise a storm. It was one evenin', when, for want of somethink to say, 'e was tellin' 'er wot 'e calkilated their united ages would make if they both lived till 'e was eighty-nine, when Mrs. Butterwick suddinly burst into tears.

"'It's crule of you, Silas,' she sobbed, 'to keep reminding' me of such things. I should 'ave thought as you 'ad more 'eart.'

"Then she went upstairs and 'ad a sort of high-stericks. And Silas, when 'e was able to sit down and think it over, came to the conclusion that there would be no peace now until 'e got to know wot the secret reely was, so as to avoid it.

"The first thing 'e did was to write to Luke Dixon. Luke was the only man 'e knew in Yorkshire, where Mrs. Butterwick 'ad lived with 'er first 'usband; and Silas arst 'im to kerlect any perticlars as 'e could of 'er early life and 'abits. 'E impressed on Luke that it was confidential, and pretended that 'e wanted to surprise 'is wife by gettin' 'er a fortune, if 'e could prove as she was the person 'e thought she might be.

"It was some days before 'e got an answer, and when it came it didn't seem much of a 'elp. Luke said as 'e 'adn't bin able to find out much about Mrs. Butterwick 'erself, but 'e well remembered 'er late 'usband, as was blacksmith in 'is native village and champion boxer of the distric', and 'ad died suddin under such suspicious circumstances as 'ad necessitated a crowner's inquest.

"Silas was very disappointed at that letter, it bein' Mrs. Butterwick 'erself 'e wanted to know about—not 'er late 'usband. But when 'e took it round to Jonathan Wicks 'e got a noo light thrown on it.

"'Wot did I tell you?' says Jonathan, lookin' very pleased. 'No wonder she's upset as you've got to know it. . . . A strong, 'ealthy man as was a blacksmith and champion boxer, dyin' suddin under suspicious circumstances, with an inquest sittin' on 'im! It's plain enough now wot 'er secret is!'

"But even then Silas couldn't see it.

"'Why, bless the man—it's as clear as daylight!' says Jonathan. '*She poisoned that first 'usband of 'ers*—that's wot she did. 'Er good cook'ry would give 'er just the opertoonity of puttin' it in 'is food; and before the pore feller knew wot 'e was doin' 'e was dead as a door-nail. . . . Lor,' says Wicks, 'I can see it all as plain as though I 'ad bin there. And a smilin', soft-spoken woman like that would 'ave no difficulty wotever in bamboozlin' a set of country jurymen to let 'er off.'

"Silas couldn't altogether believe it at first, and the more Jonathan argued 'im into it the miserabler 'e became.

"'So,' says Jonathan, summin' up 'is proofs, 'you've got the 'ole thing in your own 'ands. If ever she gets domineerin' and unmanageable, all you 'ave to do is to threaten to 'ave the body exhoomed and cut open, and she'll be as gentle as a dove. There isn't a 'usband within twenty miles as is in such a advantageous persition as you.'

"'Ah,' says Silas, 'it's all very well for you to sit there talkin' about exhoomin' bodies and cuttin' them open. But 'ow would you like to 'ave to go and live with a wife that 'as poisoned 'er first 'usband in 'is food, and is interested in silencin' 'er second? It's a pleasant thought as will come to me every time I sit down to a meal.'

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"'I don't know why you're always bringin' up my errer like this,' says Mrs. Butterwick, almost eryin'."

"And I believe it did. 'E got such a 'abit of smellin' at 'is plate before 'e would eat that Mrs. Butterwick seemed quite put out. Bein' at the time very penitent, she was always preparin' 'im separate little tit-bits as she knew he was partial to; but so sure as there was anythink as she specially pressed 'im to take, 'e was certain to refuse it, till she couldn't understand why 'is tastes 'ad all changed so suddin.

"By the end of the week 'e was gettin' quite thin and ill for want of food. And once, 'avin' confined 'is supper to cheese and cowcumber as the only safe things that she couldn't put anythink in, 'e was taken so bad in the middle of the night with a pain in the middle of 'imself, that 'e made 'er send off for the doctor in a 'urry, feelin' sure that is last end 'ad come.

"It was the worry and uncert'nty of all this that made 'im think of runnin' away. And I'm not sure that 'e wouldn't 'ave done it, if it 'adn't been that just then there came an old noospaper that Luke Dixon 'ad found. It gave a full report of the inquest, with the doctor's evidence and the verdic' of the jury decidin' that Mrs. Butterwick's first 'usband ad died of 'eart disease through 'is own excitement, and no blame attached to anybody.

"The relief of this was so great that for a time Silas felt quite cheerful. It is troo that Mrs. Butterwick was still very quiet and depressed, and quite changed from the comfort she used to be. But the feelin' as 'e could now eat 'is meals without fear made such a difference to Silas that 'e didn't seem to trouble about anythink else, and 'ad almost forgotten as there was still a secret between them.

"It was a remark as Mrs. Butterwick made one night that raised the 'ole subjec' agen, and gave 'im a noo anxiety.

"'With regard to the matter you 'ave discovered,' she said, lookin' away as if she was ashamed to allood to it, 'I 'aven't no wish to re-open a painful subjec'—but I've bin thinkin' as you ought to consult a lawyer whether our marriage 'olds good.'

"'Wot?' cries Silas, in surprise and wonder.

"'Why,' says Mrs. Silas, 'there are those as tell me that the wrong thing I did *may* make the marriage as I went through with you invelid. And for the satisfaction of us both, I think as you ought to explain it all to the lawyer, and see 'ow it stands.'

"And she was so strong on the point that Silas 'ad to promise as 'e would. But not

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knowin', you see, wot it was 'e was to explain, 'e went round to Jonathan Wicks to get 'is advice instead.

"For a long time Jonathan couldn't make 'ead or tail of this new development of the myst'ry. Then at last 'is features broke out into the smile as 'e always puts on when 'e feels glad at bein' cleverer than folks would expect.

"'We made a errer last time,' 'e said, 'owin' to misleadin' facts. And I'm glad for your sake as it was so. To 'ave your wife publicly hung for murder wouldn't 'ave been a pleasant thing for you. But this is different. You can get out of it now without any pers'nal disgrace at all.'

"'Wot do you mean?' asked Silas, thinkin' 'e was mad.

"'Why,' says Jonathan, 'the secret is at last plainly revealed by 'er own words. Wot's the one and only thing as could possibly make 'er marriage with you invelid?'

"'I don't know,' says Silas, 'unless she was under age, and didn't get her parents' consent afore she did it.'

"'Nonsense!' says Jonathan. 'You know as she wasn't. There's only one thing as could really do it, and you may depend upon it it's this: *'Er first husband never really died at all.* Consequently, she feels that now you've got to know this she isn't properly your lawful wife at all, and you can order 'er out whenever you please. No wonder she's 'umble and worrited. You've got the whip-'and, and can get rid of 'er when you like!'

"'But I don't want to get rid of 'er,' says Silas. 'And wot you say only makes things worse. A nice prospect for me, this is—to 'ave to live with a woman as may not be my wife after all, and expectin' 'er first 'usband to turn up any day. And 'im a blacksmith from Yorkshire and champion boxer as well!'

* * * * *

"I often used to wonder, in the weeks that follered, wot it was that made Silas Butterwick so uneasy and nervous. 'E seemed quite terrified if ever it was roomered that a stranger 'ad come to the village. And people visitin' at their 'ouse was astonished to see 'ow 'e would start and turn pale whenever there was a knock at the door.

"Wot with this anxiousness, and the change that 'ad come over Mrs. Butterwick, you wouldn't 'ave known them for the 'appy couple they used to be. It was in 1901 when all this 'appened, and I guess as the early part of that year was the mis'rablist time in the 'ole of Silas Butterwick's mortal life, till the census-paper came to open things out.

"'E filled it up, you see, very careful for 'imself and 'is wife. And then, as 'e never was very good with 'is pen, Mrs. Butterwick was lookin' over it to make sure as it was all right.

"'Why,' she says, 'you've put down my age wrong after all!'

"'Wot?' says Silas, lookin' at the paper. 'I've put you down at thirty-six—just a year older than me, as you yourself signed it in the marriage register.'

"'I don't know why you're always bringin' up my errer like this,' says Mrs. Butterwick, almost cryin'. 'It's a thing as I've trooly repented of, and a deception as I should never 'ave practised, only people said I looked so young, and I thought you wouldn't 'ave me if you got to know that I was reely forty-seven. I'm relieved to find,' she says, 'as a errer of that sort don't upset the marriage itself—and 'ow you ever got at the truth I never can understand. But since you did find it out for yourself, there's no good in tellin' the Government any more lies.'

"'Forty-seven!' says Silas in astonishment. 'Why—you don't mean to say as *that* was the secret you tried to keep 'idden?'

"'Bless the man!' says Mrs. Silas. 'Of course it was—that, and nothink but it.'

"'But,' says Silas, smilin' at the load as was suddinly took off 'is mind, 'why on earth didn't you tell me it was only that?'

"'Because you said as you knew all about it,' said Mrs. Butterwick."

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Picture . . Paragraphs.

The Editor is Always Pleased to Purchase Photographs Suitable for Use in this Feature. Pictures should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Copyright *Halftones Ltd.*
An enthusiastic bee-keeper, who likes the insects to swarm under his very nose.

A LOVER OF BEES.

THE sluggard has been recommended ere now to go to the ant; this intrepid bee-keeper had no need to go to the bees—they came to him. And, as may be seen, he has narrowly escaped having a bee in his bonnet; indeed, had such headgear adorned him, the thing would have happened undoubtedly.

Enthusiastic bee-keepers say that their bees know them, but they, as a rule, handle the affectionate insects protected by gauntlets and gauze, and few would permit their pets to swarm on their beards, should they have any.

The bee-keeper in the picture evidently has for his bees that love which casteth out fear, and possibly a pachydermatous complexion into the bargain. Yet from his expression one does not gather that he suffers, and it may be that he has escaped even one sting.

Certainly he has made possible a very striking photograph.

A BOAT MADE OF NEWSPAPERS.

ON July 13th of last year a bronzed boatman sculled into New York lower bay a racing shell made of newspapers from every quarter of the globe. Scare head-lines shrieked their stale horrors from the deck, the bow proclaimed births, marriages, and deaths of months ago.

The oarsman was Captain George W. Johnson, fifty-eight, who had sculled his boat all the way from St. Augustine, Florida. He built the little craft himself. It was made of a framework of wood, and divided into thirteen water-tight compartments. Upon this framework newspapers were laid. After the first sheet was in place it was coated with shellac, and then the next sheet super-imposed. When the last layer of papers was put on, the headings were carefully exposed, and most papers in the world were represented.

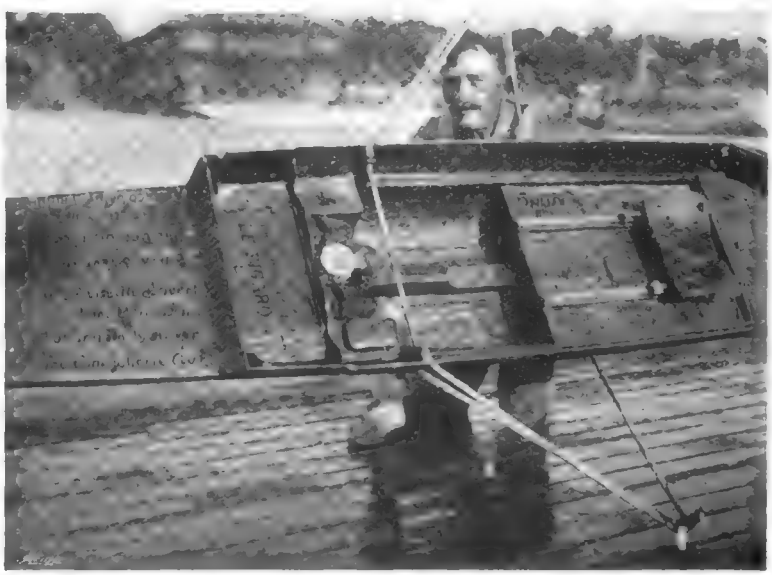

Photo *Scientific American.*
A boat built of newspapers from all parts of the world, which was sculled by its builder, Captain George W. Johnson, from St. Augustine, Florida, to New York.

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THE HARDY BATHER.

WHAT SOME PEOPLE WILL DO FOR A BATH.

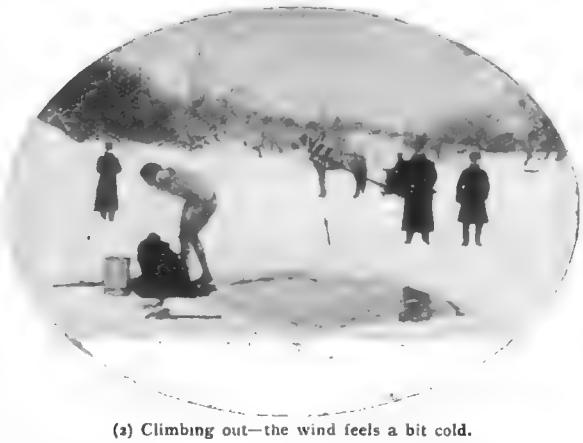
SOME people have to be driven to the bath—little boys and tramps, for instance; others defy Nature to keep them from the water. Seeing the calm, cool (certainly cool!), courageous bather in the picture, we are irresistibly reminded of the lines:

> Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus,
> Or wallow naked in December snow
> By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
> O, no! the apprehension of the good
> Gives but the greater feeling to the worse!

(1) Enjoying a bath after having broken the ice to get it.

Thus, according to the poet, if the bather thinks of the warm bed he has left, and the warm fire that awaits him at home, he will only feel all the colder. Poor man!

It is well known, and murmured about in awestruck whispers, that certain young men bathe in the Serpentine all through the winter. When a particularly hard frost comes, the papers, while inquiring "Will it last?" mention the fact that "a small party of bathers had their usual dip in the Serpentine this morning despite the weather." And the public praises or despises them, according to taste. But pictures of a man in the very act compel a tribute of admiration, however grudging. How pathetic his clothes look deposited on the cold snow! How touching the pickaxe he broke the ice with (or is it his umbrella?) lying beside them. How grand the stern imperturbability of the policemen in the background whom discipline forbids to applaud. We watch (in imagination) this brave man dive in. Little shivers run down our spines as we imagine the shock. We scramble out painfully with him, and participate in his warm, delicious glow as the reaction sets in. Accompanying him (in the spirit) on his brisk walk home, we share the mighty breakfast he disposes of, the pride of his family in his deeds, his scornful disdain of their complimentary remarks.



(2) Climbing out—the wind feels a bit cold.

We hear the admiring gossip of his friends, and little boys in the street who say: "That's 'im wot breaks the ice to 'ave 'is barf!"

And, finally, we look into the future, and see an aged man crippled with rheumatism and a doctor rubbing his hands and heaping up riches.

(3) Drying. A sharp rub down will soon bring up the circulation.

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Photo *Hutin.*
This lady, Mme. Delait, who keeps a café at La Schlucht, has, as may be seen, a luxuriant beard.

A BEARDED LADY.

Some among us, in the days of our youth, have gazed with mingled feelings, when visiting "——'s Circus, The Greatest Aggregation of Talent Now on the Road," at the bearded lady. We were not sure whether admiration or compassion were the more decent emotion.

Yet in La Schlucht the inhabitants are confronted with this problem every day, for Madame Delait, who keeps the local café, has a beard such as the young men of her country sigh in vain for from the age of eighteen until Nature grants them their heart's desire.

As a matter of fact, the people of La Schlucht feel rather proud of Madame Delait. They believe she is unique.

THE LATEST SAFE DEPOSIT.

The Carnegie Safe Deposit, New York, the very newest and most up-to-date of its kind, is guaranteed fire, burglar, mob, and earthquake proof.

The vaults are two huge steel boxes placed one above the other. The lower one is 108 feet long, 31 feet wide, and 10 feet high. They are made of the best Harveyised nickel steel, and 1400 tons of this metal were used in constructing them, more than is necessary for a modern battleship.

The armour plates are five inches thick, except at the door openings, where they are eighteen inches thick. They were tested by firing three 50 lb. capped shells from a 5 in. gun at them, but the plates failed to crack or break, and the deepest penetration was three-quarters of an inch. There are no bolts or rivets, but the plates dovetail into one another.

The two doors weigh twenty-five tons each, and have twenty-four round bolts. Twenty tons of their weight are solid, and 7½ feet in diameter. Each bolt weighs 100 lb., and they are worked by an electric motor hung inside the door. Each door has four time locks, any one of which releases the mechanism at the appointed time. Should all four go wrong, the vaults would be closed for ever, as the structure cannot be taken apart from the outside.

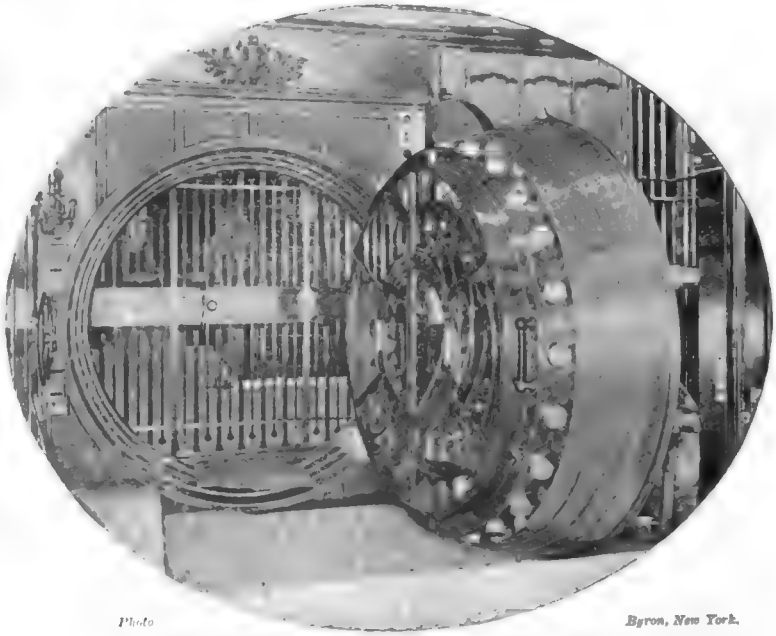

Photo *Byron, New York.*
One of the 25 ton doors of the Carnegie Safe Deposit, New York. It is fire, burglar, mob, and earthquake proof.

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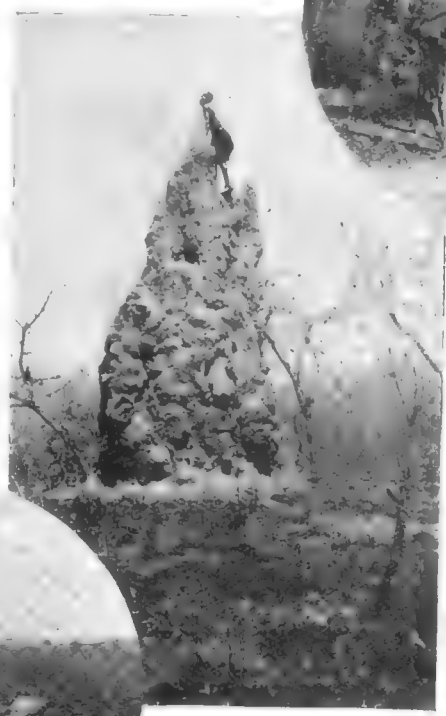
QUEER-SHAPED ANT-HEAPS.

Some African Snapshots.

Not the least interesting, perhaps, of the extensive and peculiar attractions which Africa offers to the traveller, and especially the traveller who takes photographs, are the ant-heaps. Here, in England, we are rather shy of ant-heaps; we avoid them at picnics, where, if one of the gathering should say: "Do you know, I believe I am sitting on an ant's nest!" there is a general stampede.

In Africa, things are otherwise. There one can take an intelligent interest in the ant-heaps because they are beautiful. The giant ant-heap, for example, whose pinnacle is a native, might be a pile of statuary, of which he is the crown and glory.

A curious type of ant-heap only found in the waterless country between Senegal and the Gambia. Beside it is a riding ox.



Giant ant-heap, found close to the river in a district flooded in the rainy season. It was no doubt started on the base of a fallen tree.

The mushroom or Jew's hat ant-heap. They recall very vividly the Hebrew old clo' man with a selection of hats on his head.

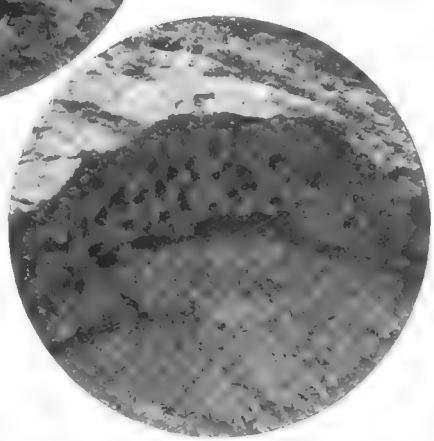
There is something very attractive also in the Jew's hat variety of heap, conjuring up as it does visions of a seedy Israelite with many hats on his head wearily droning "Old Clo'!"

The most curious picture of all is the one showing nesting places made in an ant-heap by a beautiful green bee-eater. This bird is a bright metallic green with a Prussian-blue head and crimson throat.

Why it nests amid ants would seem a mystery. Perhaps it eats them, but even, if so, what of its unfortunate young ones when the bee-eater is out, and bereaved relations of eaten ants come round to make reprisals?

This green bee-eater is similar in size to the butcher bird, and the species invariably nests in an ant-heap, the nests being at very close quarters.

The appearance of the ant-hill very much resembles that of a sand-hill or disused gravel pit, wherein a colony of sand-martins has taken up its abode.



Holes made for nesting places by a beautiful green bee-eating bird in the side of an ant-hill.

The above photographs are by J. Russell Roberts.

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The Professor and the Pearls

A Story of Groundless Suspicions.

By Ellis Wyburd.

I.

Among profound thinkers Professor Davenant stood in the foremost rank, and was universally recognised as one of the leading spirits of the age. If a graceless nephew and a few other frivolous triflers in the fashionable world chose to regard him socially as a cypher, it was because they lacked the brains to understand his work, and had no appreciation for genius.

Although absolutely trustworthy in matters of importance, he had, however, earned for himself a reputation for absence of mind in every-day concerns which almost equalled his scientific reputation. He not infrequently shook hands with his sister, with whom he lived, on meeting her in the street; and he once took an ivory-backed hair brush to church under the impression that it was her prayer-book. Believing that he had accidentally run against a lady, he one day apologised hurriedly, but politely, to a Polar bear in a furrier's shop, to the great delight of the assistants and the shopwalker. In fact, he was constantly doing unusual things which, to anyone else, might have had disagreeable consequences, but only evoked an indulgent smile, and the reflection that allowances must be made for "brainy" men.

It was in a fit of absent-mindedness, people said, that he proposed to Helen Travers, the daughter of an impecunious solicitor in the county town. She was thirty years his junior, and as unlike himself in tastes and aspirations as it was possible for one human being to be unlike another. She was of the world—worldly; he walked through life with his head in the clouds, and in boots which scandalised even his servants. She loved notoriety and display; he shrank from everything of the kind. She was restless and pleasure seeking; he liked repose and seclusion. She thought a pretty gown or a

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diamond ornament of more consequence than all the philosophies, while he regarded such things as mere dross.

That she was utterly unsuited to him was the opinion held by all who knew them; and by no one more firmly than by his only sister, Marion, who had kept house for him since he left college, and who regarded his engagement as an act of disloyalty to herself. But the fact that his marriage would separate him from his sister had not presented itself to his simple mind, his affection for her having suffered no diminution when it occurred to him to give her a sister-in-law.

"Of course, it will make no difference to you, Marion," he said, when announcing his engagement. "You will still make your home here—we both wish it."

"Thank you, dear Maurice," she had answered, to his bewilderment, "I shall never forget your kind thought, but married people are best left to themselves. No, you have made your plans, and now I must make mine."

And the day after the wedding she betook herself to a small cottage in Hertfordshire, where she gave her attention to the rearing of chickens, and, much to the annoyance of the parson of the parish, paying purely secular and "pauperising" visits to the poor.

"It is fortunate," said Miss Caroline Onslow, her dearest friend, who had unsuccessfully angled for Professor Davenant ten years before, "that poor Marion has her own little fortune and can be independent, for, of course, she will never marry, and it would be horrid for her if she had to live on them. As for Helen," she added after a pause, "*she* is a designing little minx!"

"I should have thought myself that she would have looked out for someone younger, and—well—less peculiar," answered her cousin, with whom she was discussing the matter.

"Professor Davenant is a celebrity," retorted Caroline. "His wife will be a person of some note, and it is Helen's greatest ambition to be a 'somebody.' Besides, she is one of nine, you must remember, and, to my certain knowledge, it is the first eligible offer she has had. Then look at her home—she will give up poverty for wealth and luxury. Oh, I'm not surprised at *Helen*—she knows a good thing when she sees it."

Miss Caroline Onslow thus summed up the situation with great accuracy.

II.

The "county" had not done shaking its head when the Professor and his young wife returned from their brief honeymoon, and it was long before people ceased to predict for them terrible matrimonial disaster, the old saws regarding the mating of May with December being trotted out at every tea-table for miles round.

But the Davenants were not unhappy. The Professor was fond of his frivolous little wife in his quiet, undemonstrative way, and they did not see enough of each other to weary of their yoke. He had learnt to do with a minimum of human society, and she would have found time spent in his study irksome to the last degree.

"This, my dear, is my den," he told her playfully when, on the morning of their return, he took her into his sanctum, "and when I am in it I am unapproachable, like any other wild beast."

He showed her his books, and drew her attention to his writing-table, which was littered with papers, books, and manuscripts, together with a miscellaneous collection of what, to her eyes, appeared to be rubbish. The only oasis in this paper desert was occupied by Blue Peter, a magnificent Persian cat, who, the Professor explained, had been his constant companion since kittenhood, and was the only creature permitted to enter that room and share his solitude.

Mrs. Davenant approached the cat with the friendly intention of stroking him, but, to her surprise and the Professor's amusement, he arched his back and swore at her.

"You see, Helen, he intends to show you from the beginning that he will resent any intrusion!"

"He need not fear it from me," she answered with a laugh. "With all the rest of the house at my command I can leave this room without a pang, to you and your 'familiar.'"

It is doubtful whether she ever entered it again. She certainly never hinted at a desire to "tidy" it, or to sort his papers. For the rest she had things entirely her own way. Her husband gave her a liberal allowance, and—as long as he was left undisturbed—a free hand in the management of domestic affairs. He seldom accompanied her on her visits to other houses, but he placed no restrictions on her liberty in the matter, and serenely acquiesced in her arrangements to find a suitable substitute.

And she fell back, nothing loth, on his nephew, Dick Davenant, who was handsome and appreciative, and who from his school-days had spent so much of his time at the Priory that he regarded it as a second home.

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The coming of a pretty and lively young woman like Helen promised to afford him endless opportunities for enjoyment, and his uncle was only too glad to be relieved of the task of entertaining his vivacious wife.

The Davenants had been married more than six months when the Professor suddenly remembered that he was the possessor of a priceless heirloom, in the form of a necklace of pearls of great rarity. It had been presented to one of his ancestors, a Dr. Richard Davenant, by an Indian rajah, in recognition of his services in curing his favourite wife of what the *hakims* had pronounced to be a mortal disease. It had always, hitherto, been made over to the Davenant brides on the eve of their marriage, and worn by them on that occasion; and the Professor, vexed with himself for having forgotten to follow the usual custom, lost no time in repairing the omission. Taking the pearls from an old *escritoire*, where he kept them along with a varied assortment of more or less valueless odds and ends, he carried them to his wife.

"Things of this sort are not in my line," he said, when she had thanked him and expressed her admiration, "but these are very beautiful of their kind, and, I believe, of great value. They have been in our family for a hundred and fifty years, and I am glad to make them over to you, for they are a responsibility I am in no way fitted for."

He then enjoined her to guard them with jealous care, giving her at the same time details of their history; and having thus done his duty by her, and by them, he returned to his study and straightway forgot all about them.

"I quite thought," Helen remarked to Dick the next morning, as she again feasted her eyes on them, "that he was not going to give them to me. I'm so glad he remembered them in time for the ball next week. Aren't they *too perfectly sweet* for anything?"

But Dick, who occasionally suffered from acute attacks of Socialism, answered in a way that was as unexpected as it was sordid.

"It seems a shame to me," he said, "to lock up one's capital in a thing that hardly ever sees the light of day when there are such a lot of poor brutes about who haven't got a shilling to bless themselves with. The price of those pearls would set a man up for life," and, stretching out his legs, he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and stared moodily at his boots.

This view appeared to Helen so novel, and so unreasonable, that, concluding that he had been upset about something, she hastily put the pearls away and changed the conversation.

III.

Helen Davenant was in the seventh heaven. She was becoming a personage, and had almost reached the goal of her ambition.

Not only had she been presented at Court in her wedding gown and wearing the famous pearls, but a smart woman, with charming manners and beautiful clothes, had come down from London to interview her. A few days later her portrait in Court dress, together with a long and highly imaginative version of the story connected with the necklace, appeared in the *Ladies' Trumpeter*.

Invitations for all kinds of entertainments poured in, and, to the disgust of her sister-in-law, who came to spend a week-end, were stuck in conspicuous positions about the chimney-piece in the drawing-room.

Afternoon callers at the Priory never failed to refer to the charming portrait and the romantic incidents connected with the pearls. They usually professed a great longing to handle them, and Helen had to exercise the utmost self-control to resist the temptation of displaying them to all and sundry. But when Lady Pauncefoote, who had presented her, expressed her desire to see them—having, as she said, been unable to get more than a mere glimpse of them at Court, she felt that she could not refuse her.

She fetched them, and for ten minutes the two women admired and caressed them—tried them on—held them to the light—counted them—mentally appraised their value, and bestowed on them all the appreciative epithets in their vocabulary.

"How proud you must be of them, dear Mrs. Davenant. I doubt whether the Queen herself has anything more beautiful, though pearls are her favourite gems! Of course you keep them in a safe? I should be frightened to have anything so valuable in the house myself. One *does* hear of such *dreadful* robberies nowadays!"

"Oh, I am not afraid of burglars," answered Mrs. Davenant airily. "I keep them in my jewel-box with my other trinkets—they haven't even got a case—they are wrapped in some sort of soft linen that the natives of India use for their jewellery—I think it is a mistake to be too careful over such things—it only draws attention to them, while if you don't appear anxious no one guesses their value."

"Perhaps you are right, though *I* shouldn't like to risk it," said her visitor, rising to take

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her leave, and repressing a desire to remind her that after the article in the *Ladies' Trumpeter*, no one interested would remain long in ignorance of their value.

Helen went with her to the door and saw her into her victoria, and, as she drove out, Dick Davenant, in a gorgeous motor-car, and with an ostentatious blowing of the horn, drove in.

"No," he said, in answer to Helen's greeting, "I won't come in. I just ran over to ask a favour," and he got out and fussed about the machine for a moment or two.

"The fact is," he went on, "I'm in a bit of a fix. Can you lend me fifty pounds, Helen? Only for a few days — I can't ask uncle because — well, for one thing" — he paused — "anyway I can't ask him," he finished lamely.

Dick was waiting for her at the door, and, saying that they must make haste, he hurried her into the car.

"Fifty pounds!" gasped Helen, "I'm *so* sorry, but I really *can't*, Dick! I simply haven't got it — and after all the expense of the Court I couldn't ask your uncle for any more just now. I'm awfully sorry!"

"Oh, all right — never mind," he answered with a suspicion of huff. "It is only for a few days. I'll get it somewhere else — I *must* have it!"

"I would lend it you with pleasure if I could — you know that, don't you? But——"

"That's all right — sorry I asked, that's all. Look here, Helen" — he always called her by her Christian name because he said it was absurd to be continually reminding a woman that she was aunt to a man two years older than herself — "come for a spin. This is Thompson's new car — isn't she a beauty? I have to be in town by eight o'clock, but we shall have time for a fairly good run, if you look sharp. Come, get your things on, and wrap up, for it's chilly driving."

"All right — it will be lovely — I won't be two minutes. There's tea in the drawing-room, Dick. If you would like anything stronger, ring." And she flew upstairs.

When she came down Dick was waiting for her at the door, and, saying that they must

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make haste, he hurried her into the car and they started.

Motors were, for the moment, his hobby, and although he was too poor to possess one of his own, he never had any difficulty in persuading those of his friends who were more fortunate, to lend him one. He managed them, as he managed most things, with more dash than caution, and they were soon humming along at a pace that almost took Helen's breath away—through villages, round corners, up and down inclines, regardless of time limits, and threatening with destruction everything foolhardy enough to get in their way.

Fortunately, they had a fairly clear road most of the time and slowed down as they drove into a neighbouring town, where Helen got out to do some shopping leaving Dick, who refused to return to dinner, to pursue his wild course towards London.

The drive had been most exhilarating, and her companion, whose huffiness had speedily given place to exuberant spirits, had been very entertaining, in a cynical way, whenever the exigencies of driving had allowed of conversation. Thus it happened that it was not until she was within sight of the house that she remembered, with an unpleasant little qualm which made her turn first hot and then cold, that she had forgotten to put away the pearls before she started, but had left them on one of the small tables in the drawing-room.

Of course, it was all right, she told herself. There were none but old and trustworthy servants about, but she quickened her steps with a desire to confirm her own confidence by actual vision. She knew exactly where she had left them—on the little carved table by the window, among her silver curios—and on entering she went straight to it.

The pearls were not there!

She searched over the room—quietly at first, then in a sort of panic—but she could see them nowhere. She hesitated to call the maid and make inquiries, for she still felt somehow confident that they would turn up, and did not want to betray her uneasiness. But when she had looked under chairs, shaken curtains, lifted cushions and mats, and hunted in every conceivable nook and corner without success, she rang the bell.

The parlourmaid, in answer to her agitated questions, assured her that no one had been in the room but herself. She had gone in to take away the tea things, but had not noticed the necklace, and since then no one had been in.

"Not from inside the house," she added. But she had found the window—which opened on to the lawn—open, and had shut it.

She did not think it necessary to tell her mistress that she had herself been out at the back garden gate engaged, for quite half-an-hour, in friendly converse with the postman.

Helen was in despair. She did not know with whom to take counsel. To tell her husband at this particular juncture was out of the question. In the first place she still had hopes of finding the necklace, and in the second she knew he was engaged on very important work and must on no account be upset. It was, in fact, with a feeling of relief that she recollected that he was leaving by an early train in the morning for London, where he had to attend a conference and deliver some lectures, and did not expect to return home for a week.

This would give her time to think and to seek advice. She would wire to Dick to come to her, sending him an account of what had happened by letter in case he should be unable to get away at once, and, enjoining strict secrecy on the maid, she filled in and dispatched the telegram.

Her Heaven had become suddenly clouded.

IV.

The morning light failed to reveal the whereabouts of the missing pearls, and a wire from Dick:—"Impossible to come—am writing—do nothing till you hear"—reduced Helen to uttermost depression. Nor did his letter, which came by the last post, afford her the comfort she had anticipated. He took up a tone of loftiness and severity which accorded ill with his years, and with his own devil-may-care record, and Helen would have been amused had not her sense of humour been dulled by worry and disappointment.

"I am horrified at your news," he wrote, "though I cannot say that, after that silly puff in the *Ladies' Trumpeter*, I am much surprised. There is nothing like advertising your valuables if you want to be relieved of them."

He had thought she "had more sense" than to be continually displaying her trinkets to every "impertinent visitor" who expressed a wish to see them, and wondered why it was that women did these things.

He was emphatic in his injunction that she should on no account tell either his uncle or his aunt of what had occurred until all

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means for the recovery of the pearls had been exhausted. In fact, she was not to take anyone else into her confidence. He regretted his inability to come down, but would at once put the matter in the hands of the police, and she was to be prepared for a visit from a detective on the following day.

He apologised for seeming to make it a personal grievance, going out of his way to remind her that in the event of his uncle not having a son, the necklace would come to him, and that therefore its loss affected him directly. He concluded this unsympathetic effusion by saying that it was especially unfortunate just then, as he was shortly leaving for New York on urgent business, and so would not be able to help further in the matter personally. He added that he should run down to see her before he went.

Then there was a postscript:

"Who was that forbidding-looking old woman who was with you when I came in? I didn't like the look of her!"

"Ridiculous!" ejaculated Helen. "Poor old Lady Pauncefoote—she may not be good-looking, but she is certainly quite harmless."

Really, Dick could be very exasperating at times.

It was not only the tone of his letter which surprised and hurt her, but also the fact that he was going away. She felt somehow that she was losing him, and wondered whom she could get to chaperon her in his absence, or to take his place generally as a companion. She depended on him so much, none of her own family being available, and had got to regard him as a fixture in her life which seemed to be suddenly shaping itself on unpleasant lines. For the first time since her marriage she cried herself to sleep.

In the meanwhile the greatest consternation prevailed below stairs. It was not lessened by a grim story told by the gardener, of a burglary which had been committed the year before, at the place where his brother was in service as coachman. The thief dressed himself as a ghost, and, having locked the son of the house into his room, broke into that occupied by the mistress, and representing to her that he was her deceased husband who had come from the grave to bid her give him all her available cash and jewels for the poor, had so terrified her that she handed him her keys, and allowed him to help himself, which he did liberally.

This story led to the recital of a series of similar incidents by the others, the cook capping them with a ghostly narrative of such a blood-curdling description that they were all afraid to go to bed. The housemaid, who was young and good-looking, was only prevented from fainting into the arms of the gardener by his promising that he would sleep in the house for that night, and a shake down was arranged for him in the boot room.

The next day they were subjected to such a searching examination at the hands of Mr. Kenyon, the detective sent down from Scotland Yard, that they were all reduced to tears, and two of them to giving notice on the spot.

"They could not stay in a house," they told their mistress, "where they were liable to be suspected of theft." The cook said afterwards, she'd "never been mixed up with the perlice in *that way* before," and opined that all this would not have happened if Miss Marion had not gone away.

"But," she added darkly, with a side glance at the gardener, who was past forty, "I never did 'old with helderly men marryin' young gals!"

Mr. Kenyon and a policeman in plain clothes, who had accompanied him, thoroughly examined the house and grounds. They traced footsteps leading from the drawing-room window across a small plot of grass at the side of the house, through a break in the hedge, into the orchard, where they ceased at the foot of an old apple tree. Here they dug to a depth of two or three feet, but failed to discover anything more valuable than a man's brass trouser button and an old piece of coiled wire which looked like the spring of a mouse trap. Of these Mr. Kenyon took possession, solemnly putting them into his pocket with a view to further developments. The two men stayed at the village inn for a few days, and then the detective again interviewed Mrs. Davenant.

His investigations, it seemed, had led him to the opinion that the theft had been committed by a well-known gang of burglars who, having in some way got wind of the value of the pearls, had watched the house and taken the opportunity afforded by her absence and the open window to effect an entrance. They had been very active in the neighbouring county for some time, but he believed he now had an important clue, and held out strong hopes of the recovery of the stolen property.

He hinted that in these cases there was generally collusion on the part of the servants, and advised Mrs. Davenant to keep a careful eye on hers—especially on the parlourmaid,

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of whom he seemed to entertain an unfavourable opinion. He was leaving for London, but would keep her duly informed of the progress of events, and he was so mysterious and so confident that Helen was infected with his optimism and became more cheerful.

Whatever diminution in his wife's spirits the Professor vaguely noticed on his return, he looked upon as the natural result of a week's solitude, and gently chid her for not having asked Marion, or one of her own sisters, to keep her company during his absence. She made a heroic effort to appear as though nothing unusual had occurred, sustained, in great measure, by the expectation of Dick's promised visit.

But a week later she received a letter from him dated from the s.s *Celtic* at Liverpool.

He had left England without coming to see her!

V.

Two weary months passed without bringing any news either from Scotland Yard, or from Dick Davenant. But one afternoon, when the strain of the situation was becoming almost too much for her, Helen had an unexpected visit from her sister-in-law, who was in a state of great agitation.

"I cannot stay long, Helen; I am on my way to town. Are you alone? I must see you somewhere where we shall not be interrupted by callers. I have had some news which has distressed me terribly; but I don't want Maurice to know."

Helen's heart gave a great thump.

"Come into the breakfast-room," she said. "No one will disturb us there."

"Helen, where is Dick? Have you heard from him? If so, what is his actual address?"

"Dick! He's in New York to the best of my belief. I have not heard lately, but I got a letter from him from Liverpool, saying he was leaving that day in the *Celtic*."

"So he wrote and told me. I thought perhaps you would have had later news. I hear he did not go to America at all but is in Italy!"

"But he wrote from Liverpool!"

"That may have been a blind. He might have got someone there to post it for him to put us off the scent. It sounds horrid of me, I know, but people *do* do such things. Read this," she said, drawing a letter from her pocket; "it is from Major Weston; he's a sort of connection, and lives in Italy, you know. Stay, I will read it to you."

"'I hear your nephew Dick is here. I have not seen him yet, but am told that he has rented a villa on Lake Maggiore, where he is spending money like a prince. He has some woman with him—a young lady of music-hall fame——'"

"I don't believe a word of it!" interrupted Helen indignantly.

"Why do you say that, Helen? You know he has been very wild."

"Well, in the first place, he hasn't got the money, and in the second '—she hesitated—"oh, I'm *sure* it is not true!"

She couldn't bring herself to believe that he had left her for some common girl from a music-hall, but she realised that this, as an argument, might not seem conclusive to Marion.

"Just think of it! A dreadful creature of that description! Really, it is heart-breaking! It is all so circumstantial, I'm afraid it must be true. Did he tell you where to write? He told me he would be going from place to place, and I was to address him through Fletcher & Co., and I am going to them now."

"Yes, he told me the same. I have written twice, but have had no answer; but no doubt he is very much occupied, and men hate letter-writing, you know."

Her sister-in-law looked keenly at her. Was she, too, trying to throw dust in her eyes, or was she genuinely sceptical as to the truth of the story? She decided in favour of the latter supposition.

"Oh, Helen!" she exclaimed, "you must help me to save him; he is so fond of you; you must help me to bring him back!"

Her voice trembled, and she could scarcely keep back her tears, for Dick had been to her as the apple of her eye. No one could guess what it cost this proud woman to ask help in the matter from one whom she believed had supplanted her in the affection of the two beings she held most dear.

But Helen stood to her guns.

"I *don't* believe it," she repeated. "It's a mistake. Where did he get the money?"

"Ah! that's what puzzles me. Where did he get the money?"

Then suddenly a light—a lurid light—broke on Helen's understanding. She tried to shut it out, but it was too strong for her. She felt the blood slowly mounting to her face, and was thankful that Marion, preparing to go, was not looking at her. Then followed a cold, creeping sensation, and she became deadly white, and would have fainted but for the strength of her will to control herself before her sister-in-law. Mechanically, and almost incoherently, she bade her good-bye;

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and when she had seen her drive away, she flung herself into a chair and gazed stonily before her.

"Where did he get the money? Where — did — he — get — the — money?" The words hammered in her brain with a reiteration that made her think she must be going mad. Her thoughts travelled back to the afternoon when the pearls were stolen—the afternoon on which he had confessed his need of money—the afternoon on which she had gone with him for that unlucky drive. She remembered how his mood had changed, how recklessly he had talked, and his firm determination not to return to the house.

Every attempt she made to prevent the horrible suspicion that was seizing her from taking definite shape, was foiled by the recollection of some corroborating circumstance.

She thought of his odd little outburst when, after the Professor had first given her the pearls, she had invited his admiration of them. Things that had puzzled her before, now became clear—why he had not come again to the Priory, why he had insisted so strongly on the loss of the necklace being kept from his uncle and aunt, why he had taken such pains to deceive them as to his movements—everything seemed to point to one conclusion.

She had said that she didn't believe the story that Marion had brought her. Now she told herself that it was true; and it was horrible—horrible!

He clasped them round her neck, and stood back to admire them.

She shut herself in her room to think it all out. Even as she tried to put the suspicion from her, she felt that for the sake of the family she must face it. Never must the shameful truth be known to either her husband or her sister-in-law. It would break their hearts. She must bear the knowledge and the blame—alone. She made up her mind with decision on two points; she must at once stop police investigation, which might bring disgrace on her husband's name, and she must no longer keep the Professor in ignorance of the fact that the pearls were lost. She now finally gave up the idea of their being recovered, and that hope alone had been her justification for keeping him so long in the dark. She must nerve herself to make a clean breast of it, and lest her courage should fail if she delayed to do so, she resolved that she would tell him that very evening when he came down to dinner.

As if to play into her hands, he came downstairs earlier than usual, and suggested a visit to the greenhouses before going into the dining-room.

"One moment, Maurice dear. I have something to say to you," said Helen; "you know those pearls——"

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At the word "pearls," Professor Davenant smote his forehead with his hand.

"My dear Helen, forgive me! I have been very remiss. I ought to have given them to you long ago; to tell you the truth, I fancied I had done so, but this old head of mine plays me sad tricks at times. I saw them only this afternoon. You shall have them at once—*at once*, or they may slip out of my mind again!" and before she could find words he was gone.

She dared not hope that he was not making some mistake, and when he returned, with the pearls actually in his hand, she was trembling so much she could hardly take them from him.

He clasped them round her neck, and stood back to admire them.

"You dear, darling old goose!" she exclaimed hysterically, and she kissed him and clung to him a little.

He was surprised at her manner of receiving them—at her want of restraint—but put it down to the importance attached by women to the things that do not matter.

When she had sent him off to the greenhouses alone, she shed a few tears, but they were tears of relief and joy.

"Poor dear Dick was innocent, at least, of theft, and no doubt also of the other horrid things he had been accused of. She would never forgive herself for having suspected him."

The event proved Major Weston's story to have been a case of mistaken identity. Dick had been in California, where he had undertaken to drive a friend's car in some motor races, a fact which he had not disclosed out of consideration for the nerves of his aunts.

As to the pearls, Helen never knew exactly what had happened. Only Blue Peter could have told—the Professor having forgotten—how on the afternoon when they were missed his master, going into the drawing-room in search of the *Times*, had found them lying in what he considered an unsafe place. That he had taken them to his study and put them back into the *escritoire*, and that in the excitement and interest of the business which took him to London, they had passed completely out of his mind until, going to search in the desk for a scarab, which he had promised to show to a *confrère*, he had come across them again.

What the servants thought of the *dénouement* of what at one time threatened to be a tragedy, even Blue Peter did not know.

FAIRINGS.

Come, my young master, and mistress too,
Fairings in plenty, and all for you!
Apples and pears,
Juicy and mellow;
Honey-sweet plums,
Purple and yellow.
Candies and sweets,
Cakes made of honey.
Lasses and lads,
Out with your money!
Come, my young master, and mistress too,
Fairings in plenty, and all for you!
Ribbons of green,
Orange, and blue, miss;
Kerchiefs of silk,
Dainty as you, miss.
Brooches and beads,
Which will you buy, sir?
Lockets and rings,
Maidens are shy, sir!
Come, my young master, and mistress too,
Fairings in plenty, and all for you!

Helen Taylor.

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CAP AND BELLS

CAUTIOUS.

"I can't understand why my second husband is so fastidious. He scarcely eats anything. My first husband, who died, used to eat everything I cooked for him."

"Have you told your present husband that?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps that is the reason."

* * * * *

MY IDEAL AND I.

We did not meet in glittering hall,
At youth and beauty's court.
Nor yet at banquet, play, or ball,
The scenes of Fashion's sport;
Nor anywhere among the throng
Of gilded folly's slaves,
Whose queens make wealth the cloak of wrong,
Whose kings are secret knaves.

We did not meet among the flowers,
All in a garden fair,
Where birds and bees beguile the hours,
And love is in the air;
Where Nature dons her richest robe,
To charm all eyes that see,
And groups the graces of the globe
In bowers of Arcady.

We did not meet in foreign climes,
'Neath cold or sunny skies,
'Mid Scottish hills or Spanish limes,
Or where sweet Como lies;
We did not meet in summer, spring,
In winter or in fall;
Ideals are ever vanishing—
We did not meet at all!

YOUTHFUL INGENUITY.

"I want another box of pills like I got for mother yesterday.'

"Did your mother say they were good?"

"No—but they just fit my air-gun."

* * * * *

ANTICIPATED CAUSE FOR SORROW.

Ina came in from the country on her fifth birthday to visit her cousin May. At night they were put to bed early. An hour passed, when heart-breaking sobs were heard from the children's bedroom.

"What is the matter, children?" asked May's mother, entering the dark room.

From under the bedclothes Ina sobbed out: "May won't give me any of her sweets."

"But May has no sweets," replied her aunt.

"I know that," sobbed Ina, "but she said if she did have sweets she wouldn't give me any."

* * * * *

UNDOUBTEDLY.

"What bone is the 'bone of contention'?" asked young hopeful, looking up from his book.

"The jaw-bone, my son," replied his father solemnly, "the jaw-bone."

NOT SO DUSTY.

"Are these sandwiches fresh?"

"Oh yes, sir; I dusted them myself this morning."

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THE DROPPED "H."

An Enthralling Story of Breathless Interest.

By Gordon S. Maxwell.

CHAPTER I.

The Tragedy.

The beautiful Gwendoline De Watto was seated in the old oak library.

There was no one with her.

The beautiful Gwendoline had a secret.

She was proud, but her father was a parvenu.

The beautiful Gwendoline was in mortal terror lest anyone should find out this secret of her birth.

Of her manners she was very careful; but however careful she might be, she was always in the most terrible fear that she might one day drop an "H," and so blast her social career for ever!

The beautiful Gwendoline clasped her be-ringed hands and sighed.

It was the sigh of a despairing soul!

The beautiful Gwendoline sunk her head in her hands.

A new light sprang up in her beautiful blue eyes.

"Oh, would that I were 'appy!" she cried in distracted tones.

Even as the last word left her ruby lips, she realised what had happened. A grip of ice seemed to seize her heart in iron bands. The horrible truth slowly dawned on her—the great, haunting fear of her life had culminated in this awful moment.

She had dropped an H!!!

With a cry like a wild beast she sprang up.

She tore her beautiful golden hair.

It came off.

She tore the grey beneath the gold.

"Horrors, horrors, horrors!" she cried in wild shrieks. "I am ruined, ruined, for to-morrow I receive visitors, and they will see the H I have dropped lying upon the floor, and the secret will be out!" She sank down exhausted on the sofa.

All at once a new light sprang up in her beautiful blue eyes.

"I must find that H which I dropped," she said in firm and determined tones, "and I will destroy it, and no one will know of my infamy and shame."

With these words trembling on her lips, no longer ruby, for the rouge had melted with the heat of her passion, she began searching the floor with an eagle eye.

She looked everywhere.

But she could not find it.

She was irrevocably ruined.

She stood with her hands clenched.

"What will *he* think?" she muttered; "my adored Sir Guy de Vere de Vere de Vere. He will know the awful truth."

The tear-drops welled.

Then with a great suddenness the floodgates of her anguish burst open, and the tear-drops fell in a mad, rushing torrent from those beautiful eyes.

They were followed by other tear-drops.

The salt water rose inches.

The cat thought it was at Margate.

Being a respectable single Tom cat, it objected to mixed bathing.

So it got on the table.

When the first gush of her passion was over the wretched girl ceased weeping.

The water subsided.

With a face like a Tragedy Queen she rose, and with clenched hands swept out of the room a crushed and humiliated woman.

CHAPTER II.

The Discovery.

It was night.

The pale moonlight shone through the latticed window.

The room was empty.

Deserted.

The door opened slowly.

A face appeared.

A man entered.

It was *his* face.

This man was Rollo Blackdeedes.

He loved the fair Gwendoline.

But she scorned him.

He had black hair.

He was a villain!

He glanced round the old oak library.

"She is not here; therefore she must be somewhere else! Ha, ha!"

His scowl deepened.

"Ha, fair Gwendoline, you scorn my love," he soliloquised, "but I will have you yet; you shall be mine. I will kill that upstart Sir Guy de Vere de Vere de Vere. He shall wallow in his own ber-lud. Ha, ha!"

He glued his eyes on the carpet with a serpent's glance.

"What is that I see?"

For there, lying just beneath the coal-scuttle, was the identical H that the beautiful Gwendoline had dropped.

"She is mine now; she cannot escape me. Unless she will marry me I will let the world know of her dropped H and brand her for ever in the eyes of Society."

At this moment he heard footsteps.

To glide with stealthy tread behind the window curtain was to him but the work of a moment.

Rollo sprang out and waved the H.

A woman entered.

It was the fair Gwendoline.

She carried a candle in her hand, for she had come to make a last despairing look for the dropped H.

She was dressed in a long, loose white robe.

It was her nightdress!

The cat blushed!

It was a respectable cat.

Rollo Blackdeedes did not blush.

[*CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.*]

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The Grace of a Good Figure and the Beauty of Perfect Health.

Delightful means of Looking Years Younger and Regaining Strength and Energy, whilst Permanently Banishing all traces of Obesity and its Accompanying Dangers.

THERE is an old French dictum to the effect that a woman must suffer in order to retain or recover beauty—*il faut souffrir pour être belle.* This, to a large extent, presented a melancholy truth to past generations when the prevailing remedies and methods for suppressing the external signs of the disease of obesity were almost barbarous and always dangerous. Some of these methods, alas! survive to this day, and most of their modern equivalents — modifications of the starvation, drugging, and exhausting treatments once in vogue—are no better. "Wasting" by drugs, sparing diet and excessive gymnastic exercises, never did nor ever will *cure* the disease of obesity. When persisted in they will naturally bring about a reduction which is nothing but the attenuation due to loss of strength. Unless the constitution is seriously undermined by these drastic and wholly reprehensible processes, the *tendency* to put on a lot of flesh—that tendency which appears to be inherent with many stout people—still remains and will remain so long as the Antipon treatment is neglected. The chief aim (in which it is always successful) of this world-famous treatment is to destroy fundamentally that obstinate, and in many cases almost chronic tendency to the excessive development of adipose matter. This being an accomplished fact, the rapid decrease of weight which is manifest from the outset of the Antipon treatment is a permanent decrease, not a mere temporary reduction such as that brought about by the dangerous "wasting" means we have described. With the recovery of normal weight and desirable proportions the doses of Antipon may be discontinued.

Antipon
Restores Beauty of Form to the Stoutest of Figures.
The Great Permanent Cure for Obesity in all its Stages.
Cause and Effect

Now, as to the diet question. We have shown that Antipon overcomes the tendency to run to over-stoutness, and that, therefore, the reduction of weight is permanent. What possible need is there to study dietary restrictions in such favourable conditions? The secondary object of the Antipon treatment is to re-establish perfect health, to restore strength and vitality, which are often more greviously impaired by starvation treatments than by the disease of obesity itself. Sound, blood-forming, muscle-making food is, in consequence, Antipon's natural ally. Readers will be delighted to learn that Antipon is a digestive tonic of the greatest value; of more efficacy, indeed, in this respect, than many remedies prescribed for digestive troubles exclusively. It promotes a keen, natural appetite, sound digestion, and perfect assimilation. The subject under treatment can enjoy without dread the rational pleasures of the table, will eat heartily and well, and will get daily stronger and healthier owing to wholesome food in plenty, properly digested. With the renewal of symmetrical proportions the limbs will become firm and shapely through renewed muscular development. The blood will be pure, the complexion radiant with health. Antipon has a fine tonic action on the skin, and the reduction of bulk and consequent subsidence of puffy surfaces in face, neck, etc., will leave no wrinkles, the pores of the skin regaining normal action and purity.

Antipon effects within a day and a night a decrease varying between 8oz. and 3lb. There is then a gratifying daily diminution until all the desired results are permanently attained.

Antipon is a harmless liquid composition of purely vegetable substances, is pleasant to the taste, and entirely devoid of stomach-disturbing and all other objectionable possibilities.

Antipon is sold in bottles, price 2s. 6d. and 4s. 6d., by chemists, stores, etc.; or, in the event of difficulty, may be had (on remitting amount) carriage paid, privately packed, direct from The Antipon Company, Olmar Street, London, S.E.

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"Dear Old Granny used HUDSON'S, too!"

GRANNY!

Her pleasant old face may be only a memory—a memory of kindliness and cleanliness. How proud she was of the Old Homestead, with its spotless floors; with its tables scrubbed white, and everything else clean as a new pin!

Granny used Hudson's Soap.

IT IS A VERY LONG TIME

since Hudson's Soap was first introduced. Love of Cleanliness ensured a welcome for it. Loyalty to the housewife has never worn that welcome out. Grandchildren of the original users are using Hudson's to-day. Folks do not change unless for the better, and where can you better

Hudson's Soap

For every kind of Cleaning. In Packets everywhere.

H 10

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He was a villain!

When the fair Gwendoline had reached the centre of the room, Rollo sprang out and waved the H before her astonished eyes.

Shriek upon shriek rose from ner lips and resounded through the silent house.

"Ha, ha! I have you at my mercy," cried Rollo with another fiendish grin.

"Villain, restore my H to me," replied the distracted damsel.

"Not unless you consent to marry me."

"Never."

"Then I will take the H to Sir Guy de Vere de Vere de Vere."

"Wretch!"

"Ha, ha!"

The maiden made a dash at the H which the other still dangled before her eyes.

"Help, help!" she shrieked in despair.

Her call was not in vain.

Even as the last notes of her voice died away, they both heard hurried footsteps running along the passage.

A man entered.

With a last cry the fair Gwendoline rushed towards him, threw her arms around his neck, and then fainted.

The man was Sir Guy de Vere de Vere de Vere.

The man was Sir Guy de Vere de Vere de Vere.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESCUE.

For a moment no one spoke.

Then Sir Guy noticed that the fair Gwendoline was arrayed in her night attire.

He blushed.

He was a respectable single man.

When the cat saw this sign of modesty on the part of the baronet, it went over and shook hands with him as a friend and a brother.

It was a very intelligent cat.

Sir Guy laid the fainting maiden on the sofa, and covered her up with the antimacassar.

The cat looked quite relieved.

The fair Gwendoline opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she whispered faintly.

"Here," answered Sir Guy, who was noted for his intelligence.

"Oh, Sir Guy," cried the maiden, pointing to where Rollo stood with a dark scowl on his evil face, "save me from that man."

"What has he done to you?"

"He has robbed me."

"The villain; of what?"

The maiden blushed. The moment had come. She could no longer conceal her shame from her lover.

"Of an H," she blurted out, and buried her crimson face in her hands, and the heaving of her bosom showed how strong was her emotion.

"Where did he get your H?" asked Sir Guy.

"From the floor."

"Then you dropped it?"

"Y-e-s-s," and sobs shook the sofa.

"Can you ever love me now?"

"Be calm, sweet one," replied the baronet, "my love is too strong to be broken by a mere H."

The maiden gave a gasp of joy, and starting up in the fulness of her heart, the antimacassar fell to the floor.

Sir Guy and the cat blushed.

They were respectable.

Rollo did not blush.

He was a villain.

"And now," said Sir Guy to him, "are you going to give up the H!"

"Never, I swear."

The cat gave him a reproachful glance, and put its paws over its ears in case it should hear any bad words.

"Then I will take it from you by force."

Rollo laughed, a low, mirthless laugh.

"Do your worst."

With a spring the baronet was upon him.

To and fro the men swayed, the table was overturned, and chairs were upset.

Still the men fought.

On raged the battle, but neither seemed to gain any advantage, when all of a sudden the villain slipped, and came to the ground with a sickening thud.

Sir Guy sprang up in triumph, and waving the H on high, cried:

"Ho, villain, you are beaten."

Rollo Blackdeedes rose slowly and painfully to his feet. He was not much hurt, but in the struggle his clothes had been torn, and he was annoyed, for they were his best ones.

"Ha, ha!" he muttered between his teeth, "foiled and defeated. Ha, ha!"

He slunk towards the door.

With his hand upon the handle he turned, and cried in low but fierce tones:

"But the day will come. Ha, ha!"

And he was right, for even as he spoke the dawn was breaking in the eastern sky, and the day *was* coming.

When the door had closed behind Rollo, Sir Guy fell on his knees before the maiden.

He held out the H and cried:

"Ah, fairest flower of the earth, my only own, here is what that villain would have robbed you of. Take it, and with it take my heart."

Gwendoline took the H, and carefully placed it in the middle of the fire.

"Oh, Guy, you are my hero, you really are," she cried, being very particular about the aspiration, and threw her arms round his neck.

Their lips met with a resounding smack.

It made the cat jump.

But neither heeded the faithful feline.

They had each other.

And that was all they wanted.

They were happy.

The cat went over and shook hands with him.

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A FELLOW FEELING.

A gentleman had been up in a balloon and had taken his little girl with him.

"How did you feel?" asked a friend.

"Why," said he, "when we were up but a short distance my little girl looked over the edge of the car, and cried: 'Mamma!' and I felt like that too."

* * * * *

QUITE RIGHT.

LITTLE BOY: "Mamma, the cat has eaten that seed I gave to the canary bird this morning."

MAMMA: "Cats don't eat bird seed. You must be mistaken."

LITTLE BOY: "No, ma. It was in the bird."

UBIQUITOUS.

DR. GRIFFIN: "I must say that the world is very ungrateful towards our profession. How seldom one sees a public memorial erected to a doctor!"

MRS. GOLIGHTLY: "How seldom? Oh, doctor, think of our cemeteries!"

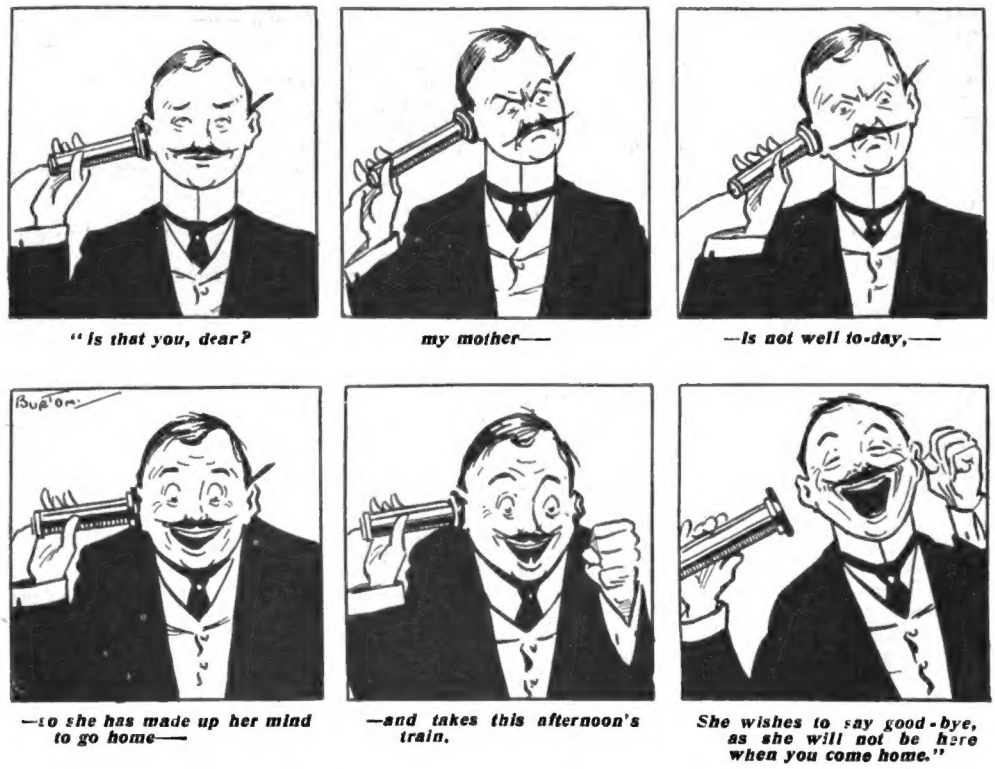
* * * * *

APPRECIATION.

McNab treated the family to a fantasia on the bagpipes, and when he had concluded he looked around with honest pride, and remarked: "Eh, mon, but that's vera deefecult!"

"Is it?" said the O'Flaherty. "Be jabbers, Oi wish it had been impossible."

AT THE 'PHONE.



"Is that you, dear? *my mother——* *—is not well to-day,——*

—so she has made up her mind to go home—— *—and takes this afternoon's train.* *She wishes to say good-bye, as she will not be here when you come home."*

COMFORT STILL.

A little fellow of five years fell and cut his upper lip so badly that a doctor had to be summoned to sew up the wound. In her distress the mother could not refrain from saying: "Oh, doctor, I fear it will leave a disfiguring scar."

Tommy looked up into her tearful face, and said: "Never mind, mamma, my moustache will cover it."

* * * * *

A THINKING PART.

"What part am I to take?" said Chappie.

"You are to be the heroine's father," replied the stage-manager.

"What does he do?"

"He dies ten years before the curtain rises on the first act."

ONE WAY OUT.

STANZER: "I'd like to know how to get this poem published. I've sent it to a dozen editors, but it's of no use."

CARPER: "You might put it in an envelope, leave it on your table, and then commit suicide. All the papers would have it next day."

* * * * *

IN VAIN.

FRIEND (at a French play): "Why did you applaud so vigorously when that comedian made his speech before the curtain?"

SPRIGGINS (confidently): "So that folks would think I understood French. What did he say?"

FRIEND: "He said the remainder of his part must be taken by an understudy, as his mother was dying."

[CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.]

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EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

PRECOCIOUS INFANT: "I think grammar's very easy, mother. I know all about singler and pureal."

PROUD MOTHER: "Do you, dear? That's very clever. Perhaps you can tell me the plural of sugar?"

PRECOCIOUS INFANT (after reflection): "Why, lumps, of course!"

* * * * *

"THERE ARE MORE WAYS OF KILLING A CAT—"

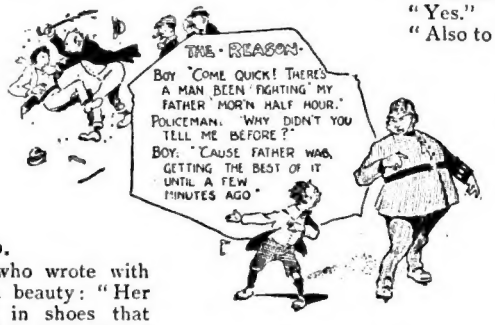
A man trained a tiny stream of water to fall drop by drop on a rock, and in five years it had worn a hole seven inches deep in solid stone. He could have made the same hole in fifteen minutes with a chisel and hammer.

* * * * *

ONE OF THE OPPRESSED.

"Not that way," whispered a burglar to his accomplice after they had broken into the hotel; "the proprietor's room is down this way."

"Wot's the matter with you?" growled the more expert cracksman; "I know my business. We want to get to the room of the head waiter."


THE REASON
BOY "COME QUICK! THERE'S A MAN BEEN FIGHTING MY FATHER MOR'N HALF HOUR."
POLICEMAN: "WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME BEFORE?"
BOY: "'CAUSE FATHER WAS GETTING THE BEST OF IT UNTIL A FEW MINUTES AGO."

* * *

TOO BAD.

The glowing reporter who wrote with reference to a well-known beauty: "Her dainty feet were incased in shoes that might have been taken for fairy boots," tied his wardrobe up in his handkerchief and left for parts unknown when it appeared the next morning: "Her dirty feet were incased in shoes that might have been taken for ferry-boats."

* * * * *

A MOTHER'S HAND.

Her hand is soft, and white, and fine,
It flutters when sometimes in mine
It lies.

Its veins, so delicately blue,
Forever fill me with some new
Surprise.

It is so dainty and so fair!
On it she bows her head in prayer,
Perhaps.

But when she spanks her wayward boys,
With what a loud, resounding noise
It slaps!

LIKE A CALL.

YOUNGLY: "Did you ever notice that the matrimonial process is like making a call? You go to adore, you ring a belle, and you give your name to the maid."

CYNICUS: "Yes, and then you're taken in."

* * * * *

INHUMAN.

A local band was one day playing at Dunfermline, when an old weaver came up and asked the bandmaster what they were playing.

"That is 'The Death of Nelson,' solemnly replied the bandmaster.

"Ay, man," remarked the weaver, "ye ha'e gien him an awfu' death."

* * * * *

SIMPLE.

In the express train from Paris to Nice two travellers began to talk.

"You are going to Nice?"

"Yes."

"Also to Monte Carlo?"

"Oh, yes. I go there every year."

"You always play there a little, doubtless?"

"Certainly — once every morning and every evening—quite regularly, two sittings in the day."

"And you lose sometimes?"

"Never."

"How is that possible? May one take the liberty to ask how you manage that?"

"It is quite simple; I play the violin, and nothing else."

* * * * *

MOST OF IT.

LODGER: "Here's a nice breakfast to ask a friend to. Did you lay the table, Mary?"

MARY: "Yes, sir. All but the eggs, sir."

* * * * *

OBVIOUSLY.

TEACHER (to class in geography): "If I should dig a hole through the earth, where would I come out?"

SMALL BOY: "Out of the hole."

* * * * *

SUCCINCT.

JUSTICE O'HALLORAN: "Have you any children, Mrs. Kelly?"

MRS. KELLY: "I hov two living an' wan married."

THE OBVIOUS DEDUCTION
TEACHER: "IF YOU ARE KIND AND POLITE TO YOUR PLAYMATES WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?"
SCHOLAR: "THEY'LL THINK THEY CAN LICK ME!"

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE

Good Counsel for Young Authors.

SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS.

SHORT STORIES are the most saleable literary commodity. This in reply to frequent inquiries from young authors concerning what branch of literature I would advise them to devote their time and brains to. A novel is a very big undertaking. Unless you possess an abnormal amount of perseverance you are very likely to "faint by the way." The average novel is twenty or thirty times longer than the average short story. The mere physical labour of writing it is considerable, and that is infinitely the least heavy part of your task.

To start your literary life with a novel reminds me of a young man—a very young man—I once knew, who, on coming down from Oxford, determined to be an architect and open his career with—a Gothic Cathedral! Write twenty or thirty short stories first. It will be amazingly good practice, and, if you understand what the world wants to read, very lucrative too.

There was never a better time than the present for short story writers. Magazines are multiplying year by year—many of them solely devoted to the publication of fiction of which nine-tenths are short stories about three or four thousand words long. And Editors depend on you who write for the existence of their journals. Never forget that! The more MSS.—especially short-story MSS.—that come into our hands the better pleased we are. You read a great deal of nonsense about Editors' lives being made a burden by the amount of atrocious trash they are compelled to wade through. Believe me, I would willingly spend two or three solid days wading through atrocious trash if I managed to capture a solitary good short story at the end of them—willingly!

PLAYS.

Still more difficult than the novel, and still more tempting to the beginner, is the writing of plays. The fuss they make in the world, and the fortunes they sometimes secure for their authors, are terrible baits to the young and ambitious.

But on your life don't attempt a play until you've mastered the whole bag of literary, dramatic, and theatrical tricks! Write little one-act plays if you like—they are hard enough to do well, however easy they may look—go as often as possible to the theatre, and watch how the dramatist secures his effects, study the technique of the theatre, and then if you feel sure you have the gift for telling dialogue, dramatic construction, and dramatic invention, start away.

I am sorry to say even then I don't feel very sanguine for the success of your efforts. But few things in this world are to be obtained without attempting, so go ahead, and good luck to you!

VERSE.

Verse is another matter altogether. You either can write it or can't write it. No amount of practice and study will enable you to write a passable verse if you have not the gift originally.

Which reminds me that Mr. R. Mertun, whose verses you often meet with in these pages, has once more sent me a rhyming letter. Here it is:

Sir, once again I venture to approach
The editorial chair you so adorn,
Trusting upon your time I don't encroach
This chilly winter morn.

I lately sent you—scarce three weeks ago—
Some verses I had written for your eye.
Alas! they somehow failed to please you. So
They came back by and by.

Sir, once again I strive to win your grace,
And, standing by the editorial chair,
Another batch upon your desk I place,
And humbly leave them there,

And (lest my letter should seem long unduly)
Just sign myself
R. Mertun, yours most truly!

Well, I have selected two from among the batch he alludes to. So he's a happy man.

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